



**STALIN**

**On Trade Unions**

collection arranged by Wolfgang Eggers

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## INTRODUCTION

The great leaders of the world proletariat, Lenin and Stalin always attached great importance to the trade unions and their role in organizing the masses for the struggle for the dictatorship of the working class, for the struggle to build a classless society.

The Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin and Stalin, was the organiser, leader of the Soviet trade unions. The Bolshevik Party has constantly fought against all enemies of the working class who tried to limit the role of the trade unions in the conditions of capitalism struggle, who tried to destroy the trade unions as the school of communism under the conditions of the Soviet system, to oppose to the party and the Soviet state.

The Soviet trade unions at all stages of their development remained faithful to the teachings of Lenin and Stalin under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

They have been active assistants to the Party in organizing the victories of the Great October Socialist Revolution. They took an active part in state-building and in the government of the country after the working class had gained power.

At all stages of socialist construction the Soviet trade unions fulfilled their historical role as the school of communism. They organised the broad masses of workers and employees to carry out the tasks assigned to them.

The Bolshevik Party, the Soviet government, educated the masses in the spirit of socialism, in the spirit of devotion to the socialist fatherland, to the cause of Lenin and Stalin.

The trade unions took an active part in the creation of the new state apparatus of the Soviet state, in the struggle against international intervention and internal counter-revolution, in the struggle against ruin and famine, in the restoration of the national economy, in the implementation of the Stalinist five-year plans which ensured the construction of essentially the first phase of communism - socialism.

In the third Stalinist five-year plan the USSR "...entered a new period of development, a period of the completion of the BUILDING OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY and a STEADY TRANSITION FROM SOCIALISM to COMMUNISM, where the decisive importance is attached to the task of educating workers in communism, and overcoming the vestiges of capitalism in the minds of the people who are the builders of communism.

(From the theses of the report of Comrade Molotov at the XVIII Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (b).

The role of trade unions as the school of communism developed to a new, even higher level. For the successful fulfilment of the tasks facing the trade unions, the trade unionists constantly armed themselves with the theory of Marxism-Leninism.



**"The most characteristic feature in the history of our trade unions", says Stalin, "is that they have emerged, developed and grown strong only after the party, around the party and in friendship with the party."**

### **Our obligations to the world proletariat.**

**They coincide with our obligations to the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. But we place them higher. The working class of the U.S.S.R. is part of the world working class. We achieved victory not solely through the efforts of the working class of the U.S.S.R., but also thanks to the support of the working class of the world. Without this support we would have been torn to pieces long ago. It is said that our country is the shock brigade of the proletariat of all countries.**

**That is well said. But it imposes very serious obligations upon us. Why does the international proletariat support us? How did we merit this support? By the fact that we were the first to hurl ourselves into the battle against capitalism, we were the first to establish working-class state power, we were the first to begin building socialism.**

**By the fact that we were engaged on a cause which, if successful, will transform the whole world and free the entire working class. But what is needed for success? The elimination of our backwardness, the development of a high Bolshevik tempo of construction. We must march forward in such a way that the working class of the whole world, looking at us, may say: There you have my advanced detachment, my shock brigade, my working-class state power, my fatherland; they are engaged on their cause, our cause, and they are working well; let us support them against the capitalists and promote the cause of the world revolution. Must we not justify the hopes of the world's working class, must we not fulfil our obligations to them? Yes, we must if we do not want to utterly disgrace ourselves.**

**Such are our obligations, internal and international.**

**As you see, they dictate to us a Bolshevik tempo of development. (STALIN)**

## COLLECTION OF TEXTS AND QUOTATIONS

From Editors

Works, Vol. 1, November 1901 - April 1907

Here, as everywhere else, our activities at first did not extend beyond the bounds of secrecy. Agitation and wide propaganda in the form that we have been witnessing lately were impossible and, willy-nilly, all efforts were concentrated in a few circles. This period has now passed. Social-Democratic ideas have spread among the masses of the workers, and activities have also overflowed the narrow bounds of secrecy and have spread to a large section of the workers. The open struggle has started. This struggle has confronted the pioneer Party workers with many questions of a kind that have been in the background hitherto and have not urgently called for explanation.

Studying in circles with the aid of books and pamphlets becomes impossible, first, because of police persecution, and secondly, because of the very way this work is organised. Agitation wanes with the very first arrests. It becomes impossible to maintain contact with the workers and to visit them often; and yet the workers are expecting explanations of numerous questions of the day.

In most cases, agitation with the aid of pamphlets which provide answers only to certain definite questions has little effect. It becomes necessary to create a literature that provides answers to questions of the day. We shall not stop to prove this commonly-known truth. The newspaper must devote special attention to the revolutionary movement that goes on, or will arise, among other elements of society. It must explain every social phenomenon and thereby influence every one who is fighting for freedom. Hence, the newspaper must devote special attention to the political situation in Russia, weigh up all the consequences of this situation, and on the widest possible basis raise the question of the necessity of waging a political struggle.



### Vol 1 - 1901-07

#### The Russian Social-Democratic Party and its Immediate Tasks

November-December 1901

Still inadequately class conscious, and ill-equipped for the struggle, the Russian workers tried gradually to extricate themselves from their hopeless position and to improve their lot somehow. There was no systematic organisational work in that movement at the time, of course; the movement was a spontaneous one.

And so, Social-Democracy set to work upon this unconscious, spontaneous and unorganised movement. It tried to develop the class consciousness of the workers, tried to unite the isolated and

sporadic struggles of individual groups of workers against individual masters, to combine them in a common class struggle, in order that it might become the struggle of the Russian working class against the oppressing class of Russia; and it tried to give this struggle an organised character.

In the initial stages, Social-Democracy was unable to spread its activities among the masses of the workers and it, therefore, confined its activities to propaganda and agitation circles. The only form of activity it engaged in at that time was to conduct study circles. The object of these circles was to create among the workers themselves a group that would subsequently be able to lead the movement. Therefore, these circles were made up of advanced workers—only chosen workers could attend them.

But soon the study-circle period passed away. At that time the spontaneous movement among the workers rose to an exceptional height.

A struggle started for a shorter working day, for the abolition of fines, for higher wages, and so forth. Social-Democracy well knew that the development of the labour movement could not be restricted to these petty demands, that these demands were not the goal of the movement, but only a means of achieving the goal. Even if these demands were petty, even if the workers themselves in individual towns and districts were now fighting separately, that fight itself would teach the workers that complete victory would be achieved only when the entire working class launched an assault against its enemy as a united, strong and organised force. This fight would also show the workers that in addition to their immediate enemy, the capitalist, they have another, still more vigilant foe—the organised force of the entire bourgeois class, the present capitalist state, with its armed forces, its courts, police, prisons and gendarmerie. If even in Western Europe the slightest attempt of the workers to improve their condition comes into collision with the bourgeois power, if in Western Europe, where human rights have already been won, the workers are obliged to wage a direct struggle against the authorities, how much more so must the workers in Russia, in their movement, inevitably come into collision with the autocratic power, which is the vigilant foe of every labour movement, not only because this power protects the capitalists, but also because, as an autocratic power, it cannot resign itself to the independent action of social classes, particularly to the independent action of a class like the working class, which is more oppressed and downtrodden than other classes.

The class consciousness of the Russian workers was extremely low. The Russian workers were only just awakening from their age-long sleep, and their eyes, accustomed to darkness, failed, of course, to register all that was happening in a world that had become revealed to them for the first time. Their needs were not great, and so their demands were not great. The Russian workers still went no further than to demand slight increases in wages or a reduction of the working day. That it was necessary to change the existing system, that it was necessary to abolish private property, that it was necessary to organise a socialist system—of all this the masses of the Russian workers had no inkling. They scarcely dared to think about abolishing the slavery in which the entire Russian people were submerged under the autocratic regime, to think about freedom for the people, to think about the people taking part in the government of the country. And so, while one section of Russian Social-Democracy deemed it its duty to carry its socialist ideas into the labour movement, the other part, absorbed in the economic struggle—the struggle for partial improvements in the conditions of the workers (as for example, reduction of the working day and higher wages) — was prone to forget entirely its great duty and its great ideals.

Instead of leading the spontaneous movement, instead of imbuing the masses with Social-Democratic ideals and guiding them towards the achievement of our final aim, this section of the Russian Social-Democrats became a blind instrument of the movement; it blindly followed in the wake of the inadequately educated section of the workers and limited itself to formulating those

needs and requirements of which the masses of the workers were conscious at the time. In short, it stood and knocked at an open door, not daring to enter the house.

The history of the St. Petersburg movement.

Its splendid development and bold progress in the early stages, in 1895-97, was succeeded by blind wandering and, finally, the movement came to a halt. This is not surprising: all the efforts of the "Economists" to build up a stable organisation for the economic struggle invariably came up against the solid wall of the government and were always shattered against it. The frightful regime of police persecution destroyed all possibility of any kind of industrial organisation. Nor did the strikes bear any fruit, because out of every hundred strikes, ninety-nine were strangled in the clutches of the police; workers were ruthlessly ejected from St. Petersburg and their revolutionary energy was pitilessly sapped by prison walls and Siberian frosts. We are profoundly convinced that this check (relative of course) to the movement was due not only to external conditions, the police regime; it was due no less to the check in the development of the very ideas, of the class consciousness of the workers, and, hence, to the waning of their revolutionary energy.

Even a small simple strike brought the workers right up against the question of our lack of political rights, brought them into collision with the government and the armed forces, and glaringly revealed how inadequate the economic struggle was by itself. Consequently, despite the wishes of these "Social-Democrats," the struggle, day by day, increasingly assumed a distinctly political character. Every attempt of the awakened workers openly to express their discontent with the existing economic and political conditions under which the Russian workers are groaning today, every attempt to free themselves from this yoke, impelled the workers to resort to demonstrations of a kind in which the economic aspect of the struggle faded out more and more. The First of May celebrations in Russia laid the road to political struggle and to political demonstrations. And to the only weapon they possessed in their struggle in the past—the strike—the Russian workers added a new and powerful weapon—the political demonstration, which was tried for the first time during the great Kharkov May Day rally in 1900.

Thus, thanks to its internal development, the Russian labour movement proceeded from propaganda in study circles and the economic struggle by means of strikes to political struggle and agitation.

This transition was markedly accelerated when the working class saw in the arena of the struggle elements from other social classes in Russia, marching with firm determination to win political freedom.

Street demonstrations are interesting in that they quickly draw large masses of the people into the movement, acquaint them with our demands at once and create extensive favourable soil in which we can boldly sow the seeds of socialist ideas and of political freedom. Street demonstrations give rise to street agitation, to the influence of which the backward and timid section of society cannot help yielding. A man has only to go out into the street during a demonstration to see courageous fighters, to understand what they are fighting for, to hear free voices calling upon everybody to join the struggle, and militant songs denouncing the existing system and exposing our social evils. That is why the government fears street demonstrations more than anything else. That is why it threatens with dire punishment not only the demonstrators, but also the "curious onlookers." In this curiosity of the people lurks the chief danger that threatens the government: the "curious onlooker" of today will be a demonstrator tomorrow and rally new groups of "curious onlookers" around himself. And today there are tens of thousands of such "curious onlookers" in every large town. Russians no longer run into hiding, as they did before, on hearing of disorders taking place somewhere or other ("I'd better get out of the way in case I get into trouble," they used to say); today they flock to the scene of the disorders and evince "curiosity": they are eager to know why these disorders are taking

place, why so many people offer their backs to the lash of the Cossacks' whip.

In these circumstances, the "curious onlookers" cease to listen indifferently to the swish of whips and sabres. The "curious onlookers" see that the demonstrators have assembled in the streets to express their wishes and demands, and that the government retaliates by beatings and brutal suppression. The "curious onlookers" no longer run away on hearing the swish of whips; on the contrary, they draw nearer, and the whips can no longer distinguish between the "curious onlookers" and the "rioters." Now, conforming to "complete democratic equality" the whips play on the backs of all, irrespective of sex, age and even class. Thereby, the whip lash is rendering us a great service, for it is hastening the revolutionisation of the "curious onlookers." It is being transformed from an instrument for taming into an instrument for rousing the people.

Hence, even if street demonstrations do not produce direct results for us, even if the demonstrators are still too weak today to compel the government immediately to yield to the popular demands—the sacrifices we make in street demonstrations today will be compensated a hundredfold. Every militant who falls in the struggle, or is torn out of our ranks, rouses hundreds of new fighters.

But in order to be able to play this leading role, the working class must organise in an independent political party. If it does that, no betrayal or treachery on the part of its temporary ally—"society"—will have any terrors for it in the struggle against absolutism. The moment this "society" betrays the cause of democracy, the working class itself will lead that cause forward by its own efforts—the independent political party will give it the necessary strength to do so.



### BRIEFLY ABOUT THE DISAGREEMENTS IN THE PARTY

Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.,

May 1905



### THE CLASS STRUGGLE

November 1906





excerpt:

### **"Anarchism or socialism?"**

Then came the time, the present time, when production is again assuming a social character and, consequently, property, too, will soon assume a social character -- and this is precisely why the consciousness of men is gradually becoming imbued with socialism.

Let us take a shoemaker who owned a tiny workshop, but who, unable to with stand the competition of the big manufacturers, closed his workshop and took a job, say, at Adelkhanov's shoe factory in Tiflis. He went to work at Adelkhanov's factory not with the view to becoming a permanent wage-worker, but with the object of saving up some money, of accumulating a little capital to enable him to reopen his workshop. As you see, the position of this shoemaker is already proletarian, but his consciousness is still non-proletarian, it is thoroughly petty-bourgeois. In other words, this shoemaker has already lost his petty-bourgeois position, it has gone, but his petty-bourgeois consciousness has not yet gone, it has lagged behind his actual position.

Clearly, here too, in social life, first the external conditions change, first the conditions of men change and then their consciousness changes accordingly.

But let us return to our shoemaker. As we already know, he intends to save up some money and then reopen his workshop. This proletarianised shoemaker goes on working, but finds that it is a very difficult matter to save money, because what he earns barely suffices to maintain an existence. Moreover, he realises that the opening of a private workshop is after all not so alluring: the rent he will have to pay for the premises, the caprices of customers, shortage of money, the competition of the big manufacturers and similar worries -- such are the many troubles that torment the private workshop owner. On the other hand, the proletarian is relatively freer from such cares; he is not troubled by customers, or by having to pay rent for premises. He goes to the factory every morning, "calmly " goes home in the evening, and as calmly pockets his "pay" on Saturdays. Here, for the first time, the wings of our shoemaker's petty-bourgeois dreams are clipped; here for the first time proletarian strivings awaken in his soul.

Time passes and our shoemaker sees that he has not enough money to satisfy his most essential needs, that what he needs very badly is a rise in wages. At the same time, he hears his fellow-workers talking about unions and strikes. Here our shoemaker realises that in order to improve his conditions he must fight the masters and not open a workshop of his own. He joins the union, enters the strike movement, and soon becomes imbued with socialist ideas. . . .

Thus, in the long run, the change in the shoemaker's material conditions was followed by a change in his consciousness: first his material conditions changed, and then, after a time, his consciousness changed accordingly.

The same must be said about classes and about society as a whole.

In social life, too, first the external conditions change, first the material conditions change, and then



the ideas of men, their habits, customs and their world outlook change accordingly.

That is why Marx says:

"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."

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Why are the fruits of the labour of the proletarians appropriated by the capitalists and not by the proletarians? Why do the capitalists exploit the proletarians and not vice versa?

Because the capitalist system is based on commodity production: here everything assumes the form of a commodity, everywhere the principle of buying and selling prevails. Here you can buy not only articles of consumption, not only food products, but also the labour power of men, their blood and their consciences. The capitalists know all this and purchase the labour power of the proletarians, they hire them. This means that the capitalists become the owners of the labour power they buy. The proletarians, however, lose their right to the labour power which they have sold. That is to say, what is produced by that labour power no longer belongs to the proletarians, it belongs only to the capitalists and goes into their pockets. The labour power which you have sold may produce in the course of a day goods to the value of 100 rubles, but that is not your business, those goods do not belong to you, it is the business only of the capitalists, and the goods belong to them -- all that you are due to receive is your daily wage which, perhaps, may be sufficient to satisfy your essential needs if, of course, you live frugally. Briefly: the capitalists buy the labour power of the proletarians, they hire the proletarians, and this is precisely why the capitalists appropriate the fruits of the labour of the proletarians, this is precisely why the capitalists exploit the proletarians and not vice versa.

But why is it precisely the capitalists who buy the labour power of the proletarians? Why do the capitalists hire the proletarians and not vice versa?

Because the principal basis of the capitalist system is the private ownership of the instruments and means of production. Because the factories, mills, the land and minerals, the forests, the railways, machines and other means of production have become the private property of a small handful of capitalists. Because the proletarians lack all this. That is why the capitalists hire proletarians to keep the factories and mills going -- if they did not do that their instruments and means of production would yield no profit. That is why the proletarians sell their labour power to the capitalists -- if they did not, they would die of starvation.

All this throws light on the general character of capitalist production. Firstly, it is self-evident that capitalist production cannot be united and organised: it is all split up among the private enterprises of individual capitalists. Secondly, it is also clear that the immediate purpose of this scattered production is not to satisfy the needs of the people, but to produce goods for sale in order to increase the profits of the capitalists. But as every capitalist strives to increase his profits, each one tries to produce the largest possible quantity of goods and, as a result, the market is soon glutted, prices fall and -- a general crisis sets in.

Thus, crises, unemployment, suspension of production, anarchy of production, and the like, are the direct results of present-day unorganised capitalist production.

If this unorganised social system still remains standing, if it still firmly withstands the attacks of the proletariat, it is primarily because it is protected by the capitalist state, by the capitalist government.

Such is the basis of present-day capitalist society.

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Future society will be socialist society. This means also that, with the abolition of exploitation commodity production and buying and selling will also be abolished and, therefore, there will be no room for buyers and sellers of labour power, for employers and employed -- there will be only free workers.

Future society will be socialist society. This means, lastly, that in that society the abolition of wage-labour will be accompanied by the complete abolition of the private ownership of the instruments and means of production; there will be neither poor proletarians nor rich capitalists -- there will be only workers who collectively own all the land and minerals, all the forests, all the factories and mills, all the railways, etc.

As you see, the main purpose of production in the future will be to satisfy the needs of society and not to produce goods for sale in order to increase the profits of the capitalists. Where there will be no room for commodity production, struggle for profits, etc.

It is also clear that future production will be socialistically organised, highly developed production, which will take into account the needs of society and will produce as much as society needs. Here there will be no room whether for scattered production, competition, crises, or unemployment.

Where there are no classes, where there are neither rich nor poor, there is no need for a state, there is no need either for political power, which oppresses the poor and protects the rich. Consequently, in socialist society there will be no need for the existence of political power.

Lastly, it is obvious that free and comradely labour should result in an equally comradely, and complete, satisfaction of all needs in the future socialist society. This means that if future society demands from each of its members as much labour as he can perform, it, in its turn, must provide each member with all the products he needs. From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs! -- such is the basis upon which the future collectivist system must be created. It goes without saying that in the first stage of socialism, when elements who have not yet grown accustomed to work are being drawn into the new way of life, when the productive forces also will not yet have been sufficiently developed and there will still be "dirty" and "clean" work to do, the application of the principle: "to each according to his needs," will undoubtedly be greatly hindered and, as a consequence, society will be obliged temporarily to take some other path, a middle path. But it is also clear that when future society runs into its groove, when the survivals of capitalism will have been eradicated, the only principle that will conform to socialist society will be the one pointed out above.

How do we know that Marx's proletarian socialism is not merely a sentimental dream, a fantasy? Where is the scientific proof that it is not?

History shows that the form of property is directly determined by the form of production and, as a consequence, a change in the form of production is sooner or later inevitably followed by a change in the form of property. There was a time when property bore a communistic character, when the forests and fields in which primitive men roamed belonged to all and not to individuals. Why did communist property exist at that time? Because production was communistic, labour was performed in common, collectively -- all worked together and could not dispense with each other. A different period set in, the period of petty-bourgeois production, when property assumed an individualistic

(private) character, when everything that man needed (with the exception, of course, of air, sunlight, etc.) was regarded as private property. Why did this change take place? Because production became individualistic; each one began to work for himself, stuck in his own little corner. Finally there came a time, the time of large-scale capitalist production, when hundreds and thousands of workers gather under one roof, in one factory, and engage in collective labour. Here you do not see the old method of working individually, each pulling his own way -- here every worker is closely associated in his work with his comrades in his own shop, and all of them are associated with the other shops. It is sufficient for one shop to stop work for the workers in the entire plant to become idle. As you see, the process of production, labour, has already assumed a social character, has acquired a socialist hue. And this takes place not only in individual factories, but in entire branches of industry, and between branches of industry; it is sufficient for the railwaymen to go on strike for production to be put in difficulties, it is sufficient for the production of oil and coal to come to a standstill for whole factories and mills to close down after a time. Clearly, here the process of production has assumed a social, collective character. As, however, the private character of appropriation does not correspond to the social character of production, as present-day collective labour must inevitably lead to collective property, it is self-evident that the socialist system will follow capitalism as inevitably as day follows night.

That is how history proves the inevitability of Marx's proletarian socialism.

There came the time of large-scale capitalist production, in which the proletarians begin to play the principal role in production, when all the principal functions in production pass to them, when without them production cannot go on for a single day (let us recall general strikes), and when the capitalists, far from being needed for production, are even a hindrance to it. What does this signify? It signifies either that all social life must collapse entirely, or that the proletariat, sooner or later, but inevitably, must take control of modern production, must become its sole owner, its socialistic owner.

Modern industrial crises, which sound the death knell of capitalist property and bluntly put the question: capitalism or socialism, make this conclusion absolutely obvious; they vividly reveal the parasitism of the capitalists and the inevitability of the victory of socialism. That is how history further proves the inevitability of Marx's proletarian socialism.

What must the proletariat do, what path must it take in order consciously to carry out its programme, to overthrow capitalism and build socialism?

The answer is clear: the proletariat cannot achieve socialism by making peace with the bourgeoisie -- it must unfailingly take the path of struggle, and this struggle must be a class struggle, a struggle of the entire proletariat against the entire bourgeoisie. Either the bourgeoisie and its capitalism, or the proletariat and its socialism! That must be the basis of the proletariat's actions, of its class struggle.

But the proletarian class struggle assumes numerous forms. A strike, for example -- whether partial or general makes no difference -- is class struggle. Boycott and sabotage are undoubtedly class struggle. Meetings, demonstrations, activity in public representative bodies, etc. -- whether national parliaments or local government bodies makes no difference -- are also class struggle. All these are different forms of the same class struggle. We shall not here examine which form of struggle is more important for the proletariat in its class struggle, we shall merely observe that, in its proper time and place, each is undoubtedly needed by the proletariat as essential means for developing its class consciousness and organisation; and the proletariat needs class consciousness and organisation as much as it needs air. It must also be observed, however, that for the proletariat, all these forms of struggle are merely preparatory means, that not one of them, taken separately, constitutes the

decisive means by which the proletariat can smash capitalism. Capitalism cannot be smashed by the general strike alone: the general strike can only create some of the conditions that are necessary for the smashing of capitalism. It is inconceivable that the proletariat should be able to overthrow capitalism merely by its activity in parliament: parliamentarism can only prepare some of the conditions that are necessary for overthrowing capitalism.

What, then, is the decisive means by which the proletariat will overthrow the capitalist system?

The socialist revolution is this means.

Strikes, boycott, parliamentarism, meetings and demonstrations are all good forms of struggle as means for preparing and organising the proletariat. But not one of these means is capable of abolishing existing inequality. All these means must be concentrated in one principal and decisive means; the proletariat must rise and launch a determined attack upon the bourgeoisie in order to destroy capitalism to its foundations. This principal and decisive means is the socialist revolution.

The socialist revolution must not be conceived as a sudden and short blow, it is a prolonged struggle waged by the proletarian masses, who inflict defeat upon the bourgeoisie and capture its positions. And as the victory of the proletariat will at the same time mean domination over the vanquished bourgeoisie, as, in a collision of classes, the defeat of one class signifies the domination of the other, the first stage of the socialist revolution will be the political domination of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

The socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, capture of power by the proletariat -- this is what the socialist revolution must start with.

This means that until the bourgeoisie is completely vanquished, until its wealth has been confiscated, the proletariat must without fail possess a military force, it must without fail have its "proletarian guard," with the aid of which it will repel the counter-revolutionary attacks of the dying bourgeoisie, exactly as the Paris proletariat did during the Commune.

The socialist dictatorship of the proletariat is needed to enable the proletariat to expropriate the bourgeoisie, to enable it to confiscate the land, forests, factories and mills, machines, railways, etc., from the entire bourgeoisie.

The expropriation of the bourgeoisie -- this is what the socialist revolution must lead to.

This, then, is the principal and decisive means by which the proletariat will overthrow the present capitalist system.

The proletarian ranks must be closely-knit and united, strong proletarian organisations must be formed, and these must steadily grow.

What forms must the proletarian organisations assume?

The most widespread, mass organisations are trade unions and workers' co-operatives (mainly producers' and consumers' co-operatives). The object of the trade unions is to fight (mainly) against industrial capital to improve the conditions of the workers within the limits of the present capitalist system. The object of the co-operatives is to fight (mainly) against merchant capital to secure an increase of consumption among the workers by reducing the prices of articles of prime necessity, also within the limits of the capitalist system, of course. The proletariat undoubtedly needs both trade unions and co-operatives as means of organising the proletarian masses. Hence, from the point

of view of the proletarian socialism of Marx and Engels, the proletariat must utilise both these forms of organisation and reinforce and strengthen them, as far as this is possible under present political conditions, of course.

But trade unions and co-operatives alone cannot satisfy the organisational needs of the militant proletariat. This is because the organisations mentioned cannot go beyond the limits of capitalism, for their object is to improve the conditions of the workers under the capitalist system. The workers, however, want to free themselves entirely from capitalist slavery, they want to smash these limits, and not merely operate within the limits of capitalism. Hence, in addition, an organisation is needed that will rally around itself the class-conscious elements of the workers of all trades, that will transform the proletariat into a conscious class and make it its chief aim to smash the capitalist system, to prepare for the socialist revolution.

Such an organisation is the Social-Democratic Party of the proletariat.

This Party must be a class party, and it must be quite independent of other parties -- and this is because it is the party of the proletarian class, the emancipation of which can be brought about only by this class itself.

This Party must be a revolutionary party -- and this because the workers can be emancipated only by revolutionary means, by means of the socialist revolution.

This Party must be an international party, the doors of the Party must be open to all class-conscious proletarians -- and this because the emancipation of the workers is not a national but a social question.

What should be the relations between the Party on the one hand and the co-operatives and trade unions on the other? Should the latter be party or non-party? The answer to this question depends upon where and under what conditions the proletariat has to fight. At all events, there can be no doubt that the friendlier the trade unions and co-operatives are towards the socialist party of the proletariat, the more fully will both develop. And this is because both these economic organisations, if they are not closely connected with a strong socialist party, often become petty, allow narrow craft interests to obscure general class interests and thereby cause great harm to the proletariat. It is therefore necessary, in all cases, to ensure that the trade unions and co-operatives are under the ideological and political influence of the Party. Only if this is done will the organisations mentioned be transformed into a socialist school that will organise the proletariat -- at present split up into separate groups -- into a conscious class.



Works, Vol. 2, 1907 - 1913

More About a Conference with Guarantees (February 3, 1908)



What Do Our Recent Strikes Tell Us? (March 2, 1908)



The Change in the Oil Owners' Tactics (March 9, 1908)



We Must Prepare! (March 16, 1908)



Economic Terrorism and the Labour Movement (March 30, 1908)



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Life Triumphs!

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April 18 (May 1), 1917



Against Isolated Demonstrations

June 14, 1917



To all the Toilers, to all the Workers and Soldiers of Petrograd

June 17, 1917



At the Demonstration

June 20, 1917



Close the Ranks !

July 15, 1917



### What has Happened ?

July 23, 1917



### To all the Toilers, to all the Workers and Soldiers of Petrograd

July 24, 1917



### Speech Delivered at the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks)

July 26-August 3, 1917 - HTML

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## What do the Capitalists Want?

(August 6, 1917)



### The Railway Strike and the Democratic Bankrupts

The railway strike lasted from September 24 to 26, 1917. The railway employees demanded pay increases, an eight-hour day and better food supplies. The strike spread to all the railways in the country and had the sympathy and support of the industrial workers.

The grandly conceived and magnificently organized railway strike is apparently coming to an end. The victory is with the railwaymen, because it is self-evident that the puny coalition of the Kornilov-defencist camp is incapable of withstanding the mighty onslaught of the entire democracy of the country. It is now clear to all that the strike was "instigated" not by the malicious intent of the railwaymen, but by the anti-revolutionary policy of the Directory. It is now clear to all that the strike was forced on the country not by the Railwaymen's Committees, but by the counter-revolutionary threats of Kerensky and Nikitin. It is now clear to all that the failure of the strike would have led to the certain militarization of the railways and . . . the consolidation of the power of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The railwaymen were right in retorting to the despicable calumnies of Kerensky and Nikitin with the damning accusation:

"It is not we, citizens Kerensky and Nikitin, who have betrayed the country, but you who have betrayed your ideals, and the Provisional Government which has betrayed its promises. This time no words or threats can stop us."

All this, we repeat, is clear and generally known.

Yet, it appears, there are men calling themselves democrats who nevertheless think it permissible at this grave moment to throw stones at the railwaymen, not realizing, or not desiring to realize, that they are thereby bringing grist to the mill of the cannibals of Rech and Novoye Vremya.

We are referring to the Menshevik Rabochaya Gazeta.

Accusing the strike leaders of having "bent to the forces of chaos" in declaring the strike, the paper menacingly declares:

"The democracy will not forgive the railwaymen's general staff for this. The interests of the whole country, of the entire democracy, cannot be staked so lightly" (Rabochaya Gazeta, No. 170).



It is incredible, but a fact: a shabby sheet, which has not a trace of democracy in it, considers itself entitled to hurl threats at the genuine democracy, the toilers of the railways.

"The democracy will not forgive." . . . But in the name of which democracy are you speaking, gentlemen of Rabochaya Gazeta?

Is it in the name of the democracy of the Soviets, which turned its back on you, and whose will you faked at the conference?

But who gave you the right to speak in the name of that democracy?

Or are you speaking in the name of Tsereteli, Dan, Lieber and the other counterfeiters who faked the will of the Soviets at the conference and betrayed the conference itself at the "negotiations" in the Winter Palace?

But who gave you the right to identify these betrayers of democracy with "the democracy of the entire country"?

Will you ever realize that the way of Rabochaya Gazeta and the way of "the democracy of the entire country" have irrevocably parted?

Wretched democratic bankrupts! . . .



### Starvation in the Factories

The sufferings of the factory areas are severer still. This is not the first time starvation has visited the industrial population, but never has it been so rampant.

Russia, which before the war exported 400-500 million poods of grain annually, now, in time of war, is unable to feed her own workers. Factories are coming to a standstill and the workers are fleeing from their jobs because the industrial areas are without bread, without food.

Here are some reports from various localities.

"A dispatch from Shuya states that wood sawing has stopped throughout the uyezd owing to lack of food. The Koryukovka sugar refinery may have to close down because there is no food for the workers. The sugar beet is beginning to rot. The 12,000 inhabitants of the Yartsevo spinning and weaving mills settlement, Smolensk Gubernia, are in a dreadful plight. Flour and cereal stocks are completely exhausted. The gubernia food committee is powerless. Not receiving food, the workers are getting restless. Disorders are inevitable. The factory stewards' council of the Kuv-shinov paper mills, Tver Gubernia, wires: Workers on the verge of starvation; food denied everywhere; request immediate relief. The management of the Morokin factory, Vichuga, wires: Food situation

menacing; workers starving and getting restless; urgent measures needed to ensure supplies. The factory committee of this company has sent the following telegram to the Ministry: Urgently implore supplies of flour for the workers, who are already starving."

Such are the facts.

The agricultural areas complain that they get extremely small supplies of manufactured goods from the factory areas. They therefore release grain for the factory areas in equally small quantities. But shortage of bread in the industrial areas is driving the workers from the factories and cutting down factory output, thus further reducing the quantity of goods sent to the countryside, and this, in its turn, leads to a further reduction of the amount of grain flowing to the factories, worse starvation, and further desertions of workers from the factories. We ask:

What is the way out of this vicious circle, of this iron vice which is gripping workers and peasants?

What has the so-called coalition government to offer besides the notorious "dictators" it is secretly sending to the starving industrial areas?

Do Messieurs the compromisers realize that the imperialist bourgeoisie, whom they are still supporting, have driven Russia into an impasse, from which there is no escape except by stopping the predatory war?

Rabochy Put No. 26, October 3, 1917



### Campaign against the Workers

(September 28, 1917)

A week ago the bourgeois press started a witch-hunt against the Donets Basin workers. There was no fantastic charge the corrupt bourgeois papers did not level against them—they accused them of "anarchy," of "wrecking plants," of "arresting and beating up" office personnel! Already then it could be foreseen that a campaign against the Donets workers was being planned, and that the government was paving the way for it. And, sure enough, the government "did not remain deaf" to the howls of the hirelings of the bourgeoisie. That is what a government of bourgeois dictatorship is for. It was reported in the press that the Provisional Government's Chief Economic Committee, with the "benevolent acquiescence" of Kerensky, of course, "deemed it expedient to dispatch to Kharkov and the Donets Basin . . . a person vested with dictatorial powers. This person is to be instructed to induce the manufacturers to continue operation and to bring influence to bear on the working masses with a view to their pacification. All means of coercion at the disposal of the government authorities are to be placed at the command of this person" (Torgovo-Promyshlennaya Gazeta

September 26).

Mark: a "dictator" with "means of coercion." . . . Against whom is this still anonymous "dictator" being dispatched? Is it against the Donets employers, who for three months now have been deliberately curtailing production and criminally swelling unemployment, and are now openly and publicly organizing lockouts and threatening the disruption of the economic life of the country?

Of course, not!

The Chief Economic Committee bluntly says that the whole trouble lies with "malicious agitators," and not the employers, for, "According to available information, the excesses have been provoked by groups of malicious agitators" (Ibid.).

It is against them, in the first place, that the "dictator" with his "means of coercion" is being dispatched.

Nor is that all. According to Birzhovka, the Kharkov Conference of Manufacturers has resolved:

- 1) That "hiring and discharge of office personnel and workers is the exclusive right of the owners."
- 2) That "interference by the Soviet of Workers' Deputies in the management and control of production is impermissible."
- 3) That "the owners cannot bear the expense of maintenance and payment of the members of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, executive committees or trade unions."
- 4) That "no wage increases can improve the lot of the workers" (Birzheviye Vedomosti, September 27).

In brief, the manufacturers are declaring war on the workers and their organizations.

It need scarcely be said that lockout-man Konovalov's government will not fail to take the lead in this war on the workers.

And since the workers will not surrender without a fight, a "dictator" with "means of coercion" is needed. That's the whole secret.

Savinkov was called a counter-revolutionary for having drafted a bill for the militarization of enterprises working for defence.

Kornilov was accused of treason for having demanded the enactment of that bill.

What shall we call a government which "without wasting words" sends to the Donets Basin a "dictator" with unlimited powers and armed with "all means of coercion" to wage war on the working masses and to smash their organizations?

What have Messieurs the "socialist" Ministers to say to this?

Rabochy Put No. 22, September 28, 1917



## A Paper Coalition

September 30, 1917

Economic disruption is talked about. Economic disruption is written about. Economic disruption is used as a bogey, frequently with an allusion to the "anarchistic" sentiments of the workers. But nobody wants to admit openly that the disruption is frequently engineered and deliberately aggravated by the capitalists, who close down factories and doom the workers to unemployment. Birzhovka has some interesting information on this score.

"At the mills of the Russo-French Cotton Spinning Corporation in Pavlovsky Posad, Moscow Gubernia, a conflict arose over non-observance of the contract drawn up by a commission of the Orekhovo-Zuyevo district under the chairmanship of Minister Pro-kopovich. Some four thousand workers are employed at the mills. The workers' committee informed the Ministry of Labour that a grave situation had arisen owing to the refusal of the employers to submit to a decision of the arbitration court, and owing to their deliberate reduction of productivity of labour. Negotiations had been going on for four months, and now there was a danger of the mills being closed down. The management of the Russo-French mills, on its part, made representations to the French Embassy, affirming that the workers refused to obey a decision of the arbitration court and were threatening excesses and destruction of property. The French Embassy requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to assist in settling the dispute."

And what do we find? It appears that the "management of the mills" and the "French Embassy" have both libelled the workers in an effort to whitewash the lockout capitalists. Listen to this:

"The case was submitted to the Moscow Commissar of the Ministry of Labour, who, after investigating the conflict on the spot, informed the Minister of Labour that the factory management had systematically evaded carrying out decisions of the arbitration court. The report of the Ministry of Labour's Moscow Commissar has been transmitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

As we see, even a commissar of a counter-revolutionary Ministry had to admit that the workers were right.

Nor is that all. Birzhovka reports another and even more interesting case.

"The Ministry of Labour has been informed from Moscow that the management of the A. V. Smirnov factory had announced that the plant, which employs three thousand workers, would be closed down owing to lack of raw materials and fuel and the need for capital repairs. A commission, consisting of representatives of Moscow Fuel and the Moscow Factory Conference, together with the workers' committee of the factory, instituted an inquiry and found that the reasons given for closing down the factory were baseless, since there was sufficient raw material for operation and the repairs could be effected without suspending work. On the strength of this, the workers arrested the factory owner. The Zem-stvo Assembly has recommended the sequestration of the factory. The

Pokrovsky Executive Committee and the Provisional Government's uyezd commissar are assisting in the settlement of the conflict."

Such are the facts.

The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik compromisers cry from the housetops that a coalition with the "virile forces" of the country is essential, and they definitely point to the Moscow industrialists. And they constantly stress that what they mean is not a verbal coalition in the Winter Palace, but a real coalition in the country. . . . We ask:

Is any real coalition possible between factory owners who deliberately swell unemployment and workers who, with the benevolent assistance of Provisional Government commissars, arrest them for this?

Is there any limit to the stupidity of "revolutionary" windbags who never tire of singing the praises of coalition with lockout criminals?

Do not these ridiculous trumpeters of coalition realize that no coalition is possible now except on paper, a coalition concluded within the walls of the Winter Palace and doomed beforehand to failure?

Rabochy Put No. 24, September 30, 1917



### The Plot Against the Revolution

(October 4, 5, 7, 1917)



"Workers, in time of a strike, usually ride blacklegs on a wheelbarrow."

Blacklegs of the Revolution

(October 15, 1917)

1920

[Volume 4](#)



Speech at the Opening of the First All-Russian Conference of Responsible Personnel of the  
Workers' and Peasants' Inspection,

(October 15, 1920)

1921 - 1923

[Volume 5](#)



Our Disagreements

January 19, 1921 in Pravda, No. 12  
Works, J.V. Stalin, Volume 5, pp. 4-15

Our disagreements on the trade-union question are not disagreements in principle about appraisal of the trade unions. The well-known points of our programme on the role of the trade unions, and the resolution of the Ninth Party Congress on the trade unions, which Trotsky often quotes, remain (and will remain) in force. Nobody disputes that the trade unions and the economic organizations ought to and will permeate each other ("coalescence"). Nobody disputes that the present period of the country's economic revival dictates the necessity of gradually transforming the as yet nominal industrial unions into real industrial unions, capable of putting our basic industries on their feet. In short, our disagreements are not disagreements about matters of principle.

Nor do we disagree about the necessity of labor discipline in the trade unions and in the working class generally. The talk about a section of our Party "letting the reins slip out of its hands," and leaving the masses to the play of elemental forces, is foolish. The fact that Party elements play the leading role in the trade unions and that the trade unions play the leading role in the working class remains indisputable.

Still less do we disagree on the question of the quality of the membership of the Central Committees of the trade unions, and of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions. All agree that the membership of these institutions is far from ideal, that the ranks of the trade unions have been depleted by a number of military and other mobilizations, that the trade unions must get back their old officials and also get new ones, that they must be provided with technical resources, and so forth.

No, our disagreements are not in this sphere.

I

## Two Methods of Approach to the Mass of the Workers

Our disagreements are about questions of the means by which to strengthen labor discipline in the working class, the methods of approach to the mass of the workers who are being drawn into the work of reviving industry, the ways of transforming the present weak trade unions into powerful, genuinely industrial unions, capable of reviving our industry.

There are two methods: the method of coercion (the military method), and the method of persuasion (the trade-union method). The first method by no means precludes elements of persuasion, but these are subordinate to the requirements of the coercion method and are auxiliary to the latter. The second method, in turn, does not preclude elements of coercion, but these are subordinate to the requirements of the persuasion method and are auxiliary to the latter. It is just as impermissible to confuse these two methods as it is to confuse the army with the working class.

A group of Party workers headed by Trotsky, intoxicated by the successes achieved by military methods in the army, supposes that those methods can, and must, be adopted among the workers, in the trade unions, in order to achieve similar successes in strengthening the unions and in reviving industry. But this group forgets that the army and the working class are two different spheres, that a method that is suitable for the army may prove to be unsuitable, harmful, for the working class and its trade unions.

The army is not a homogeneous mass; it consists of two main social groups, peasants and workers, the former being several times more numerous than the latter. In urging the necessity of employing chiefly methods of coercion in the army, the Eighth Party Congress based itself on the fact that our army consists mainly of peasants, that the peasants will not go to fight for socialism, that they can,



and must, be compelled to fight for socialism by employing methods of coercion. This explains the rise of such purely military methods as the system of Commissars and Political Departments, Revolutionary Tribunals, disciplinary measures, appointment and not election to all posts, and so forth.

In contrast to the army, the working class is a homogeneous social sphere; its economic position disposes it towards socialism, it is easily influenced by communist agitation, it voluntarily organizes in trade unions and, as a consequence of all this, constitutes the foundation, the salt of the earth, of the Soviet state. It is not surprising, therefore, that the practical work of our industrial unions has been based chiefly on methods of persuasion. This explains the rise of such purely trade-union methods as explanation, mass propaganda, encouragement of initiative and independent activity among the mass of the workers, election of officials, and so forth.

The mistake Trotsky makes is that he underrates the difference between the army and the working class, he puts the trade unions on a par with the military organizations, and tries, evidently by inertia, to transfer military methods from the army into the trade unions, into the working class. Trotsky writes in one of his documents:

"The bare contrasting of military methods (orders, punishment) with trade-union methods (explanation, propaganda, independent activity) is a manifestation of Kautskian-Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary prejudices. . . . The very contrasting of labour organisations with military organisation in a workers' state is shameful surrender to Kautskyism."

That is what Trotsky says.

Disregarding the irrelevant talk about "Kautskyism," "Menshevism," and so forth, it is evident that Trotsky fails to understand the difference between labor organizations and military organizations, that he fails to understand that in the period of the termination of the war and the revival of industry it becomes necessary, inevitable, to contrast military with democratic (trade-union) methods, and that, therefore, to transfer military methods into the trade unions is a mistake, is harmful.

Failure to understand that lies at the bottom of the recently published polemical pamphlets of Trotsky on the trade unions.

Failure to understand that is the source of Trotsky's mistakes.

## II

### Conscious Democracy and Forced "Democracy"

Some think that talk about democracy in the trade unions is mere declamation, a fashion, called forth by certain phenomena in internal Party life, that, in time, people will get tired of "chatter" about democracy and everything will go on in the "old way."

Others believe that democracy in the trade unions is, essentially, a concession, a forced concession, to the workers' demands, that it is diplomacy rather than real, serious business.

Needless to say, both groups of comrades are profoundly mistaken. Democracy in the trade unions, i.e., what is usually called "normal methods of proletarian democracy in the unions," is the conscious democracy characteristic of mass working-class organizations, which presupposes consciousness of the necessity and utility of systematically employing methods of persuasion

among the millions of workers organized in the trade unions. If that consciousness is absent, democracy becomes an empty sound.

While war was raging and danger stood at the gates, the appeals to "aid the front" that were issued by our organizations met with a ready response from the workers, for the mortal danger we were in was only too palpable, for that danger had assumed a very concrete form evident to everyone in the shape of the armies of Kolchak, Yudenich, Denikin, Pilsudski and Wrangel, which were advancing and restoring the power of the landlords and capitalists. It was not difficult to rouse the masses at that time. But today, when the war danger has been overcome and the new, economic danger (economic ruin) is far from being so palpable to the masses, the broad masses cannot be roused merely by appeals. Of course, everybody feels the shortage of bread and textiles; but firstly, people do contrive to obtain both bread and textiles in one way or another and, consequently, the danger of a food and goods famine does not spur the masses to the same extent as the war danger did; secondly, nobody will assert that the masses are as conscious of the reality of the economic danger (shortage of locomotives and of machines for agriculture, for textile mills and iron and steel plants, shortage of equipment for electric power stations, and so forth) as they were of the war danger in the recent past. To rouse the millions of the working class for the struggle against economic ruin it is necessary to heighten their initiative, consciousness and independent activity; it is necessary by means of concrete facts to convince them that economic ruin is just as real and mortal a danger as the war danger was yesterday; it is necessary to draw millions of workers into the work of reviving industry through the medium of trade unions built on democratic lines. Only in this way is it possible to make the entire working class vitally interested in the struggle which the economic organizations are waging against economic ruin. If this is not done, victory on the economic front cannot be achieved.

In short, conscious democracy, the method of proletarian democracy in the unions, is the only correct method for the industrial unions.

Forced "democracy" has nothing in common with this democracy.

Reading Trotsky's pamphlet *The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions*, one might think that he, in essence, is "also" in favor of the "democratic" method. This has caused some comrades to think that we do not disagree about the methods of work in the trade unions. But that is absolutely wrong, for Trotsky's "democracy" is forced, half-hearted and unprincipled, and, as such, merely supplements the military-bureaucratic method, which is unsuitable for the trade unions.

Judge for yourselves.

At the beginning of November 1920, the Central Committee adopted, and the Communist group at the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions carried through, a resolution stating that the "most vigorous and systematic struggle must be waged against the degeneration of centralism and militarized forms of work into bureaucracy, tyranny, officialdom and petty tutelage over the trade unions. . . that also for the Tsektran (the Central Committee of the Transport Workers Union, led by Trotsky) the time for the specific methods of administration for which the Central Political Administration of the Railways was set up, owing to special circumstances, is beginning to pass away," that, in view of this, the Communist group at the conference "advises the Tsektran to strengthen and develop normal methods of proletarian democracy in the union," and instructs the Tsektran "to take an active part in the general work of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions and to be represented in it on an equal footing with other trade-union associations" (see *Pravda*, No. 255). In spite of that decision, however, during the whole of November, Trotsky and the Tsektran continued to pursue the old, semi-bureaucratic and semi-military line, continued to rely on the Central Political Administration of the Railways and the Central Political Administration of

Water Transport, strove to "shake up," to blow up, the A.R.C.C.T.U. and upheld the privileged position of the Tsektran compared with other trade union associations. More than that. In a letter "to the members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee," dated November 30, Trotsky, just as "unexpectedly," stated that "the Central Political Administration of Water Transport . . . cannot possibly be dissolved within the next two or three months." But what happened? Six days after that letter was written (on December 7), the same Trotsky, just as "unexpectedly," voted in the Central Committee for "the immediate abolition of the Central Political Administration of the Railways and the Central Political Administration of Water Transport, and the transfer of all their staffs and funds to the trade-union organization on the basis of normal democracy." And he was one of the eight members of the Central Committee who voted for this against the seven who considered that the abolition of these institutions was no longer enough, and who demanded, in addition, that the existing composition of the Tsektran be changed. To save the existing composition of the Tsektran, Trotsky voted for the abolition of the Central Political Administrations in the Tsektran.

What had changed during those six days? Perhaps the railway and water transport workers had matured so much during those six days that they no longer needed the Central Political Administration of the Railways and the Central Political Administration of Water Transport? Or, perhaps, an important change in the internal or external political situation had taken place in that short period? Of course not. The fact is that the water transport workers were vigorously demanding that the Tsektran should dissolve the Central Political Administrations and that the composition of the Tsektran itself should be changed; and Trotsky's group, fearing defeat and wishing at least to retain the existing composition of the Tsektran, was compelled to retreat, to make partial concessions, which, however, satisfied nobody.

Such are the facts.

It scarcely needs proof that this forced, half-hearted, unprincipled "democracy" has nothing in common with the "normal methods of proletarian democracy in the unions," which the Central Committee of the Party had recommended already at the beginning of November, and which are so essential for the revival of our industrial trade unions.

In his reply to the discussion at the meeting of the Communist group at the Congress of Soviets, Trotsky protested against the introduction of a political element into the controversy about the trade unions, on the ground that politics had nothing to do with the matter. It must be said that in this Trotsky is quite wrong. It scarcely needs proof that in a workers' and peasants' state, not a single important decision affecting the whole country, and especially if it directly concerns the working class, can be carried through without in one way or another affecting the political condition of the country. And, in general, it is ridiculous and shallow to separate politics from economics. For that very reason every such decision must be weighed up in advance also from the political point of view.

Judge for yourselves.

It can be now taken as proved that the methods of the Tsektran, which is led by Trotsky, have been condemned by the practical experience of the Tsektran itself. Trotsky's aim in directing the Tsektran and influencing the other unions through it was to reanimate and revive the unions, to draw the workers into the task of reviving industry. But what has he actually achieved? A conflict with the majority of the Communists in the trade unions, a conflict between the majority of the trade unions and the Tsektran, a virtual split in the Tsektran, the resentment of the rank-and-file workers organised in trade unions against the "Commissars." In other words, far from a revival of the unions taking place, the Tsektran itself is disintegrating. There can be no doubt that if the methods of the Tsektran were introduced in the other unions, we would get the same picture of conflict, splits and

disintegration. And the result would be that we would have dissension and a split in the working class.

Can the political party of the working class ignore these facts? Can it be asserted that it makes no difference to the political condition of the country whether we have a working class solidly united in integral trade unions, or whether it is split up into different, mutually hostile groups? Can it be said that the political factor ought not to play any role in appraising the methods of approach to the masses, that politics have nothing to do with the matter?

Obviously not.

The R.S.F.S.R. and its associated republics now have a population of about 140,000,000. Of this population, 80 per cent are peasants. To be able to govern such a country, the Soviet power must enjoy the firm confidence of the working class, for such a country can be directed only through the medium of the working class and with the forces of the working class. But in order to retain and strengthen the confidence of the majority of the workers, it is necessary systematically to develop the consciousness, independent activity and initiative of the working class, systematically to educate it in the spirit of communism by organizing it in trade unions and drawing it into the work of building a communist economy.

Obviously, it is impossible to do this by coercive methods and by "shaking up" the unions from above, for such methods split the working class (the Tsektran!) and engender distrust of the Soviet power. Moreover, it is not difficult to understand that, speaking generally, it is inconceivable that either the consciousness of the masses or their confidence in the Soviet power can be developed by coercive methods.

Obviously, only "normal methods of proletarian democracy in the unions," only methods of persuasion, can make it possible to unite the working class, to stimulate its independent activity and strengthen its confidence in the Soviet power, the confidence that is needed so much now in order to rouse the country for the struggle against economic ruin.

As you see, politics also speak in favor of methods of persuasion.

January 5, 1921

J. Stalin



[The Party Before and After Taking Power](#)

August 28, 1921



The Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P. (B.)

April 17-25, 1923

- excerpt -

The first and principal transmission belt, the first and principal transmission apparatus by means of which the Party links itself with the working class, is the trade unions. During the past year of activity, as is shown by the figures dealing with what has been done to strengthen this principal transmission belt which connects the Party with the class, the Party has increased, has strengthened its influence in the leading bodies of the trade unions. I am not referring to the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. Everybody knows what its composition is. Nor am I referring to the Central Committees of the trade unions. I have in mind, chiefly, the Gubernia Trade-Union Councils. Last year, at the Eleventh Congress of our Party, 27 per cent of the chairmen of Gubernia Trade-Union Councils were Party members of pre-October standing; this year the figure is over 57 per cent. Not a very great achievement, but an achievement nevertheless. It shows that leading elements of our Party of pre-October standing hold in their hands the main threads of the unions with the aid of which they link the Party with the working class.

I shall not deal with the composition of the workers' trade unions as a whole. The figures show that at the time of the last congress the total membership of the trade unions was about 6,000,000. This year, at the time of the present congress, the total membership is 4,800,000. That looks like a step backward, but it only appears to be so. Last year—permit me to tell the truth here!—the union membership figures were inflated. The figures that were given did not correctly reflect the actual situation. The figures given at this congress, although smaller than last year's, are more real, and are nearer the truth. I regard this as a step forward, in spite of the fact that the membership of the trade unions has diminished. Thus, the transformation of the trade unions from unreal and bureaucratic bodies into real live unions, having a common life with their leading bodies, on the one hand, and the increase in the percentage of leading Party elements in the Gubernia Trade-Union Councils from 27 per cent to 57 per cent on the other—such is the success we have to record in our Party's activities in strengthening the trade unions during the past year.

It cannot be said, however, that everything went well in this sphere. The primary units of the trade unions—the factory committees—are not yet ours everywhere. For example, of the 146 factory committees in the Kharkov Gubernia, 70 have not a single Communist in them. But such cases are rare. In general it must be admitted that the development of the trade unions, as regards the growth of the Party's influence in the gubernia and in the lower units, undoubtedly shows progress. This front can be regarded as secure for the Party. In the trade-union sphere we have no strong

opponents.



On 5th Anniversary of First Women Workers' and Peasants' Congress

1923



The Party's Tasks

Report Delivered at an Enlarged Meeting of the Krasnaya Presnya District Committee of the R.C.P.  
(B.)

With Group Organisers, Members of the Debating Society and of the Bureau of the Party Units  
December 2, 1923

- excerpts -

The Party line says that the Party membership must be kept informed about the work of the economic organisations, the factories and trusts, for, naturally, our Party units are morally responsible to the non-Party masses for the defects in the factories. Nevertheless, in Party practice it was considered that since there is a Central Committee which issues directives to the economic organisations, and since these economic organisations are bound by those directives, the latter will be carried out without control from below by the mass of the Party membership.

The Party line says that responsible workers in different branches of work, whether Party, economic, trade-union, or military workers, notwithstanding their specialisation in their own particular work, are interconnected, constitute inseparable parts of one whole, for they are all working in the common cause of the proletariat, which cannot be torn into parts. In Party practice, however, it was considered that since there is specialisation, division of labour according to properly Party activity and economic, military, etc., activity, the Party officials are not responsible for those working in the economic sphere, the latter are not responsible for the Party officials, and, in general, that the weakening and even loss of connection between them are inevitable.

The second cause is that our state apparatus, which is bureaucratic to a considerable degree, exerts a

certain amount of pressure on the Party and the Party workers. In 1917, when we were forging ahead, towards October, we imagined that we would have a Commune, a free association of working people, that we would put an end to bureaucracy in government institutions, and that it would be possible, if not in the immediate period, then within two or three short periods, to transform the state into a free association of working people. Practice has shown, however, that this is still an ideal which is a long way off, that to rid the state of the elements of bureaucracy, to transform Soviet society into a free association of working people, the people must have a high level of culture, peace conditions must be fully guaranteed all around us so as to remove the necessity of maintaining a large standing army, which entails heavy expenditure and cumbersome administrative departments, the very existence of which leaves its impress upon all the other state institutions. Our state apparatus is bureaucratic to a considerable degree, and it will remain so for a long time to come. Our Party comrades work in this apparatus, and the situation—I might say the atmosphere—in this bureaucratic apparatus is such that it helps to bureaucratise our Party workers and our Party organisations.

Fifthly, our Party units in the factories must be drawn into dealing with the various questions relating to the course of affairs in the respective enterprises and trusts. Things must be so arranged that the units are kept informed about the work of the administrations of our enterprises and trusts and are able to exert an influence on this work. You, as representatives of units, are aware how great is the moral responsibility of our factory units to the non-Party masses for the course of affairs in the factories. For the unit to be able to lead and win the following of the non-Party masses in the factory, for it to be able to bear responsibility for the course of affairs in the factory—and it certainly has a moral responsibility to the non-Party masses for defects in the work of the factory—the unit must be kept informed about these affairs, it must be possible for it to influence them in one way or another. Therefore, the units must be drawn into the discussion of economic questions relating to their factories, and economic conferences of representatives of the factory units in a given trust must be called from time to time to discuss questions relating to the affairs of the trust. This is one of the surest ways both of enlarging the economic experience of the Party membership and of organising control from below.

1924

[Volume 6](#)



The foundations of Leninism

April 1924

- excerpts -

6) Reformism and revolutionism.



What is the difference between revolutionary tactics and reformist tactics?

Some think that Leninism is opposed to reforms, opposed to compromises and agreements in general. This is absolutely wrong. Bolsheviks know as well as anybody else that in a certain sense "every little helps," that under certain conditions reforms in general, and compromises and agreements in particular, are necessary and useful.

"To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie," says Lenin, "a war which is a hundred times more difficult, protracted and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to refuse beforehand to manoeuvre, to utilize the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to reject agreements and compromises with possible (even though temporary, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies -- is not this ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not as though, when making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain, we were to refuse beforehand ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace our steps, ever to abandon the course once selected and to try others?" (See Vol. XXV, p. 210.)

Obviously, therefore, it is not a matter of reforms or of compromises and agreements, but of the use people make of reforms and agreements.

To a reformist, reforms are everything, while revolutionary work is something incidental, something just to talk about, mere eyewash. That is why, with reformist tactics under the conditions of bourgeois rule, reforms are inevitably transformed into an instrument for strengthening that rule, an instrument for disintegrating the revolution.

To a revolutionary, on the contrary, the main thing is revolutionary work and not reforms; to him reforms are a by-product of the revolution. That is why, with revolutionary tactics under the conditions of bourgeois rule, reforms are naturally transformed into an instrument for disintegrating that rule, into an instrument for strengthening the revolution, into a strongpoint for the further development of the revolutionary movement.

The revolutionary will accept a reform in order to use it as an aid in combining legal work with illegal work and to intensify, under its cover, the illegal work for the revolutionary preparation of the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

That is the essence of making revolutionary use of reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism.

The reformist, on the contrary, will accept reforms in order to renounce all illegal work, to thwart the preparation of the masses for the revolution and to rest in the shade of "bestowed" reforms.

That is the essence of reformist tactics.

Such is the position in regard to reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism.

The situation changes somewhat, however, after the overthrow of imperialism, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Under certain conditions, in a certain situation, the proletarian power may find itself compelled temporarily to leave the path of the revolutionary reconstruction of the existing order of things and to take the path of its gradual transformation, the "reformist path," as Lenin says in his well-known article "The Importance of Gold," the path of flanking movements, of reforms and concessions to the non-proletarian classes -- in order to disintegrate these classes, to give the revolution a respite, to recuperate one's forces and prepare the conditions for a new offensive. It cannot be denied that in a sense this is a "reformist" path. But it must be borne in mind

that there is a fundamental distinction here, which consists in the fact that in this case the reform emanates from the proletarian power, it strengthens the proletarian power, it procures for it a necessary respite, and its purpose is to disintegrate, not the revolution, but the non-proletarian classes.

Under such conditions a reform is thus transformed into its opposite.

The proletarian power is able to adopt such a policy because, and only because, the sweep of the revolution in the preceding period was great enough and therefore provided a sufficiently wide expanse within which to retreat, substituting for offensive tactics the tactics of temporary retreat, the tactics of flanking movements.

Thus, while formerly, under bourgeois rule, reforms were a by-product of revolution, now, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the source of reforms is the revolutionary gains of the proletariat, the reserves accumulated in the hands of the proletariat and consisting of these gains.

"Only Marxism," says Lenin, "has precisely and correctly defined the relation of reforms to revolution. However, Marx was able to see this relation only from one aspect, namely, under the conditions preceding the first to any extent permanent and lasting victory of the proletariat, if only in a single country. Under those conditions, the basis of the proper relation was: reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. . . . After the victory of the proletariat, if only in a single country, something new enters into the relation between reforms and revolution. In principle, it is the same as before, but a change in form takes place, which Marx himself could not foresee, but which can be appreciated only on the basis of the philosophy and politics of Marxism. . . . After the victory (while still remaining a 'by-product' on an international scale) they (i.e., reforms -- J. St.) are, in addition, for the country in which victory has been achieved, a necessary and legitimate respite in those cases when, after the utmost exertion of effort, it becomes obvious that sufficient strength is lacking for the revolutionary accomplishment of this or that transition.

Victory creates such a 'reserve of strength' that it is possible to hold out even in a forced retreat, to hold out both materially and morally." (See Vol. XXVII, pp. 84-85.)

## VIII. THE PARTY

### 3) The Party as the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.

The Party is the organized detachment of the working class. But the Party is not the only organization of the working class. The proletariat has also a number of other organizations, without which it cannot wage a successful struggle against capital: trade unions, co-operatives, factory organizations, parliamentary groups, non-Party women's associations, the press, cultural and educational organizations, youth leagues, revolutionary fighting organizations (in times of open revolutionary action), Soviets of deputies as the form of state organization (if the proletariat is in power), etc. The overwhelming majority of these organizations are non-Party, and only some of them adhere directly to the Party, or constitute offshoots from it. All these organizations, under certain conditions, are absolutely necessary for the working class; for without them it would be impossible to consolidate the class positions of the proletariat in the diverse spheres of struggle; for without them it would be impossible to steel the proletariat as the force whose mission it is to replace the bourgeois order by the socialist order. But how can single leadership be exercised with such an abundance of organizations? What guarantee is there that this multiplicity of organizations

will not lead to divergency in leadership? It may be said that each of these organizations carries on its work in its own special field, and that therefore these organizations cannot hinder one another. That, of course, is true. But it is also true that all these organizations should work in one direction for they serve one class, the class of the proletarians. The question then arises: Who is to determine the line, the general direction, along which the work of all these organizations is to be conducted? Where is the central organization which is not only able, because it has the necessary experience, to work out such a general line, but, in addition, is in a position, because it has sufficient prestige, to induce all these organizations to carry out this line, so as to attain unity of leadership and to make hitches impossible?

That organization is the Party of the proletariat.

The Party possesses all the necessary qualifications for this because, in the first place, it is the rallying centre of the finest elements in the working class, who have direct connections with the non-Party organizations of the proletariat and very frequently lead them; because, secondly, the Party, as the rallying centre of the finest members of the working class, is the best school for training leaders of the working class, capable of directing every form of organization of their class; because, thirdly, the Party, as the best school for training leaders of the working class, is, by reason of its experience and prestige, the only organization capable of centralizing the leadership of the struggle of the proletariat, thus transforming each and every non-Party organization of the working class into an auxiliary body and transmission belt linking the Party with the class.

The Party is the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.

This does not mean, of course, that non-Party organizations, trade unions, co-operatives, etc., should be officially subordinated to the Party leadership. It only means that the members of the Party who belong to these organizations and are doubtlessly influential in them should do all they can to persuade these non-Party organizations to draw nearer to the Party of the proletariat in their work and voluntarily accept its political leadership.

That is why Lenin says that the Party is "the highest form of proletarian class association," whose political leadership must extend to every other form of organization of the proletariat.

That is why the opportunist theory of the "independence" and "neutrality" of the non-Party organizations, which breeds independent members of parliament and journalists isolated from the Party, narrow-minded trade-union functionaries and co-operative officials who have become philistines, is wholly incompatible with the theory and practice of Leninism.



## Thirteenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)

May 23-31, 1924

### 1. The Mass Organisations that Link the Party with the Class

a) The trade unions. Last year, according to the statistical returns, the trade union membership was 4,800,000. This year it is 5,000,000. There is no doubt about the increase. Trade union membership in the industries covered by the twelve principal industrial unions is 92 per cent of all the workers employed. In the basic industries trade union membership comprises 91-92 per cent of the working class. That is the position in industry.

The picture is less favourable in agriculture, where there are some 800,000 workers, and where, if we count the agricultural workers employed outside state-owned enterprises, trade union organisation amounts to 3 per cent.

As for communist influence in the unions, we have data on the chairmen of gubernia and area trade union councils. At the time of the Twelfth Congress the proportion of underground-period Party members among them was in excess of 57 per cent; at the time of the present congress it is only 35 per cent. A decline, but there has been an increase in the percentage of trade union council chairmen who joined the Party after February 1917. The explanation is that the trade union membership has grown, there are not enough underground-period Party members and the cadres are being augmented by the younger Party element. The proportion of workers among these chairmen was 55 per cent; now it has become 61 per cent. The social composition of the leading trade union bodies has improved.



### Worker Correspondents

Interview With a Representative of the Magazine "Rabochy Korrespondent"

Vol. 6, January-November, 1924, pp. 274-275

The importance of workers' participation in the conduct of a newspaper lies primarily in the fact that such participation makes it possible to transform this sharp weapon in the class struggle, as a newspaper is, from a weapon for the enslavement of the people into a weapon for their emancipation. Only worker and peasant correspondents can bring about this great transformation.

Only as an organised force can worker and peasant correspondents play, in the course of development of the press, the part of mouthpiece and vehicle of proletarian public opinion, of exposé of the defects in Soviet public life, and of tireless fighter for the improvement, of our work of construction.

Should worker correspondents be elected at workers' meetings, or should they be chosen by the editors? I think that the second method (choice by the editors) is more advisable. The underlying principle must be the correspondent's independence of the institutions and persons that, in one way or another, he comes in contact with in the course of his work. This, however, does not mean independence of that intangible but constantly operating force that is called proletarian public opinion, of which the worker correspondent must be the vehicle.

Worker and peasant correspondents must not be regarded merely as future journalists, or as factory social workers in the narrow sense of the term; they are primarily exposers of the defects in our Soviet public life, fighters for the removal of those defects, commanders of proletarian public opinion, striving to direct the inexhaustible forces of this immense factor so that they help the Party and the Soviet power in the difficult task of socialist construction.

This gives rise to the question of educational work among worker and peasant correspondents. It is, of course, necessary to give worker and peasant correspondents some grounding in the technique of journalism; but that is not the main thing. The main thing is that the worker and peasant correspondents should learn in the course of their work and acquire that intuition of the journalist-public worker without which the correspondent cannot fulfil his mission; and which cannot be implanted by any artificial measures of training in the technical sense of the term.

Direct ideological guidance of worker and peasant correspondents must be exercised by the newspaper editors, who are linked with the Party. The censorship of articles must be concentrated in the hands of the newspaper editors.

Persecution of worker and peasant correspondents is barbarous, a survival of bourgeois customs. The newspaper must undertake to protect its correspondent from persecution, for it alone is capable of raising a fierce campaign to expose obscurantism.



Entry in the Red Book of the Dynamo Factory

(November 7, 1924)



CONCERNING THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

## STRENGTHENING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ELEMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MOVEMENT.

Bolshevik, No. 11,

September 20, 1924

Still more difficult and peculiar are the conditions under which the trade unions are developing in the West.

Firstly, they are narrow owing to their "craft" union practice and are hostile to socialism, for, having arisen before the Socialist parties, and having developed without the aid of the latter, they are accustomed to plume themselves on their "independence," they place craft interests above class interests, and refuse to recognise anything beyond "a penny a day" increase in wages.

Secondly, they are conservative in spirit and hostile to all revolutionary undertakings, for they are led by the old, venal trade union bureaucracy, which is being fed by the bourgeoisie and is always ready to place the trade unions at the service of imperialism.

Lastly, these trade unions, united around the Amsterdam reformists, constitute that vast army of reformism which serves as a prop for the present-day capitalist system.

Of course, besides the Amsterdam reactionary unions there are the revolutionary unions, which are associated with the Profintern. But, firstly, a considerable section of the revolutionary unions, not wishing to cause a split in the trade union movement, remain in the Amsterdam federation and submit to its discipline; secondly, in the decisive European countries (Britain, France and Germany) the Amsterdamites still represent the majority of the workers. It must not be forgotten that the Amsterdam federation unites no less than fourteen million organised workers. To think that it will be possible to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat in Europe against the will of these millions of workers would be a great mistake; it would mean departing from the path of Leninism and courting inevitable defeat. Hence, the task is to win these millions of workers to the side of the revolution and communism, to free them from the influence of the reactionary trade union bureaucracy, or at least to get them to adopt an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards communism.

That is how matters stood until recently. But during the past few years the situation began to improve. The home of the narrow and reactionary trade unions is Britain, once the industrial-capitalist monopolist of the world market. Her loss of this monopoly is connected with the development of finance capital, characteristic of which is the struggle between a number of the biggest countries for colonial monopoly. The imperialist phase of capitalism is accompanied by an expansion of territory for the narrow, reactionary trade unions, but it also causes a shrinkage of their material base, for imperialist superprofits are the object of the struggle of a number of countries, and the colonies are less and less inclined to remain in the role of colonies. Nor must it be forgotten that the war has seriously undermined production in Europe. As is known, total production in Europe at the present time amounts to not more than 70 percent of pre-war production.

Hence the curtailment of production and the successful capitalist offensive against the working class. Hence the wage cuts, the virtual abolition of the 8-hour day, and the series of unsuccessful

defensive strikes, which once again demonstrated the betrayal of the working class by the trade union bureaucracy. Hence the colossal unemployment and the growth of the workers' dissatisfaction with the reactionary trade unions. Hence the idea of a united front in the economic struggle of the working class and the plan to unite the two trade union Internationals into a single International capable of organising resistance to capital. The talk of the reformists at the Vienna Congress of the Amsterdam International (June 1924) about negotiating with the "Russian" trade unions and the appeal of the British trade unions at the Trades Union Congress (beginning of September 1924) for trade union unity are merely a reflection of the growing pressure that the masses are bringing to bear upon the reactionary trade union bureaucracy. The most remarkable thing about all this is the fact that it is precisely the British trade unions, that centre of conservatism and the principal core of the Amsterdam federation, which are taking the initiative in the matter of uniting the reactionary and revolutionary trade unions. The appearance of Left-wing elements in the British labour movement is the surest indication that all is not well "among them, over there," in Amsterdam.

Some people think that the campaign for trade union unity is needed precisely at the present time because Left-wing elements have appeared in the Amsterdam federation who absolutely must be supported by all efforts and by all means. That is not true, or, to be more exact, it is only partly true. The point is that the Communist Parties in the West are becoming mass organisations, they are turning into genuine Bolshevik parties, they are growing and are advancing to power simultaneously with the growth of discontent among the broad masses of the workers, and, hence, that things are moving towards proletarian revolution. But the bourgeoisie cannot be overthrown unless it is deprived of its prop in the shape of the reactionary Amsterdam federation; the dictatorship cannot be achieved unless that bourgeois citadel in Amsterdam is won to the side of the revolution. That, however, cannot be done by one-sided action from outside.

That aim can be achieved at the present time only by combined work inside and outside for obtaining trade union unity. That is why the question of trade union unity and of entering international industrial federations is becoming an urgent one. Of course, the Lefts must be supported and pushed forward. But real support can be rendered the Lefts only if the banner of the revolutionary unions is kept unfurled, if the reactionary Amsterdam leaders are scourged for their treachery and splitting tactics, if the Left leaders are criticised for their halfheartedness and irresolution in the struggle against the reactionary leaders. Only such a policy can prepare the ground for real trade union unity. Otherwise we may get a repetition of what occurred in Germany in October last year, when the reactionary Right-wing Social-Democracy successfully utilised Levi's Left-wing group for the purpose of surrounding the German revolutionary workers.

1925

[Volume 7](#)



To The Teachers' Congress

(January 6, 1925)



Speech Delivered at a Plenum of the  
Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.)

January 19, 1925

The growth of a revolutionary mood among the workers in Britain. This is a fact of first-rate importance. Britain holds a commanding position in Europe. The incipient split between the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party, and the fissures which have begun to develop within the British Labour Party, go to show that something revolutionary, something new is developing in Britain. This is alarming the ruling strata in Britain. And this is bound to turn them against Soviet Russia, for the key-note of the revival of the movement in Britain is friendship with Russia.



[The Prospects of the Communist Party of Germany and the Question of Bolshevisation](#)

Interview with Herzog, Member of the G.C.P.

February 3, 1925

[the famous 12 theses of Bolshevization]





## A Letter to Comrade Me—rt

February 28, 1925

5) You are quite right about work in the trade unions. The role of the trade unions in Germany is different from that of the trade unions in Russia. In Russia, the trade unions arose after the Party and, in essence, they were the Party's auxiliary organs. That is not the case in Germany, or in Europe generally. There, the Party arose from the trade unions; the latter successfully competed with the Party in influencing the masses, and often acted as a heavy fetter on the Party. If the broad masses in Germany, or in Europe generally, were asked which organisation they regarded as nearer to them, the Party or the trade unions, they would undoubtedly answer that the trade unions were nearer to them than the Party. Whether good or bad, it is a fact that the non-Party workers in Europe regard the trade unions as their principal strongholds, which help them in their struggle against the capitalists (wages, hours, insurance, etc.), whereas they regard the Party as something auxiliary, secondary, although necessary. That explains the fact that the broad masses of the workers regard the direct struggle waged against the present trade unions from outside by the "ultra-Lefts" as a struggle against their principal strongholds, which took them decades to build, and which the "Communists" now want to destroy. Failure to take this specific feature into account means wrecking the entire communist movement in the West. But from this two conclusions follow : firstly, that in the West the vast working-class masses cannot be won over unless the trade unions are won over, and, secondly, that the trade unions cannot be won over unless we work inside them and strengthen our influence there.

That is why special attention must be paid to the work of our comrades in the trade unions.



## The International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist Parties

March 22, 1925

3. The fight for trade-union unity in Europe and the crisis in the Amsterdam Federation. The

fight of the British trade unions for trade-union unity, the support of this fight by the Soviet trade unions, the transformation of the fight for trade-union unity into a fight against the counter-revolutionary leaders of the Amsterdam Federation (Oudegeest, Sassenbach, Jouhaux, and others), who pursue a policy of splitting the trade unions — are all facts which indicate that the Amsterdam Federation is in a state of profound crisis. And what does the crisis in the Amsterdam Federation mean? It means the instability of bourgeois rule, for the Amsterdam trade-union bureaucracy is a part and a prop of this rule.

Hence the tasks of the Communist Parties:

3. To promote the fight for trade-union unity and to carry it to a successful conclusion, bearing in mind that this is the surest means of winning over the vast working-class masses; for it is impossible to win over the vast proletarian masses unless the trade unions are won over; and it is impossible to win over the trade unions unless work is conducted in them and unless the confidence of the masses of the workers is won in the trade unions month by month and year by year. Failing this, it is out of the question even to think of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat.



J. V. Stalin

### The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

Speech Delivered in the Czechoslovak Commission of the E.C.C.I.

January 17, 1925

Is there a crisis in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia? Yes, there is.

What is the character of the crisis, and from where does danger threaten, from the Left or from the Right? Here, too, Comrade Smeral was right when he said that danger threatens from both sides, from the Left and from the Right. There is the danger of over-estimating the importance of partial demands to the detriment of fundamental demands, of over-estimating parliamentary activity and work in the trade unions. That is the danger from the Right, for it leads to adapting oneself to the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, there is the danger of under-estimating the importance of partial demands, of parliamentary activity, of work in the trade unions, and so forth. That is the danger from the Left, for it leads to becoming divorced from the masses and to sectarianism. Comrade Smeral's desire to take a middle position in this conflict between the two opposite deviations is quite legitimate. The only trouble is that he has failed to keep to that position and has followed in the wake of the Rights.

Which is the more serious danger, the Left or the Right? I think that Comrade Smeral has not cleared up this question for himself. He directs his criticism mainly against the Lefts, in the belief that they are the chief danger. The facts, however, show that the chief danger comes from the Right

and not from the Left. Comrade Smeral has not realised this, and herein lies his first mistake.

2. It is known that some of the leaders of three trade unions — those of the transport workers, woodworkers and building workers — issued a document demanding the complete independence of the unions from the Party. It is known that this document is evidence of the existence of a number of Right elements in the trade unions of Czechoslovakia. This document should have been analysed in full view of the Party, and the Party should have been warned of the danger of the trade unions becoming divorced from it. What did Comrade Smeral do in this case? He hushed up this question too; he withdrew the document from circulation and thereby hid it from the eyes of the Party membership. The Rights escaped unscathed and the "Party's prestige" was saved. And that is called combating the Rights!

As regards the rights of the Comintern and its intervention in the affairs of the national parties, I emphatically disagree with those comrades who spoke in favour of curtailing those rights. They want the Comintern to be transformed into an organisation situated beyond the stars, gazing dispassionately at what is going on in the individual parties and patiently recording events. No, comrades, the Comintern cannot become an organisation beyond the stars. The Comintern is a militant organisation of the proletariat, it is linked with the working-class movement by all the roots of its existence and cannot refrain from intervening in the affairs of individual parties, supporting the revolutionary elements and combating their opponents. Of course, the parties possess internal autonomy, the party congresses must be unfettered, and the Central Committees must be elected by the congresses. But to deduce from this that the Comintern must be denied the right of leadership, and hence of intervention, means working on behalf of the enemies of communism.



J. V. Stalin

## RESULTS OF WORK OF XIV CONFERENCE OF THE R.C.P.(B.)

Report Delivered at a Meeting of the Active  
of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B.)  
May 9, 1925

### II THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES IN THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES

That task is to link the Communist Parties in the West with the trade unions. That task is to develop and bring to a successful conclusion the campaign for trade-union unity, to see that all Communists without fail join the trade unions, to work systematically in them for combining the workers in a

united front against capital, and in this way to create the conditions that will enable the Communist Parties to have the backing of the trade unions.

If this task is not carried out it will be impossible to transform the Communist Parties into genuine mass parties or to create the conditions necessary for the victory of the proletariat.

The trade unions and parties in the West are not what the trade unions and the Party are here in Russia.

The relations between the trade unions and the parties in the West are quite different from those that have been established here in Russia. In our country the trade unions arose after the Party, and around the Party of the working class. Trade unions had not yet arisen in our country when the Party and its organisations were already leading not only the political but also the economic struggle of the working class, down to small and very small strikes. That, mainly, explains the exceptional prestige of our Party among the workers prior to the February Revolution, in contrast to the rudimentary trade unions which then existed here and there. Real trade unions appeared in our country only after February 1917. Before October we already had definitely formed trade-union organisations, which enjoyed tremendous prestige among the workers. Already at that time Lenin said that without trade-union support it would be impossible either to achieve or to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat. The most powerful development of the trade unions in our country was reached after the capture of power, particularly under the conditions of NEP. There is no doubt that our powerful trade unions now constitute one of the chief supports of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The most characteristic feature of the history of the development of our trade unions is that they arose, developed and became strong after the Party, around the Party, and in friendship with the Party.

The trade unions in Western Europe developed under entirely different circumstances. Firstly, they arose and became strong long before working-class parties appeared.

Secondly, there it was not the trade unions that developed around the working-class parties; on the contrary, the working-class parties themselves emerged from the trade unions. Thirdly, since the economic sphere of the struggle, the one that is closest to the working class, had already been captured, so to speak, by the trade unions, the parties were obliged to engage mainly in the parliamentary political struggle, and that could not but affect the character of their activities and the importance attached to them by the working class. And precisely because the parties there arose after the trade unions, precisely because the trade unions came into being long before the parties, and in fact became the proletariat's principal fortresses in its struggle against capital—precisely for that reason, the parties, as independent forces that did not have the backing of the trade unions, were pushed into the background.

From this it follows, however, that if the Communist Parties want to become a real mass force, capable of pushing the revolution forward, they must link up with the trade unions and get their backing.

Failure to take this specific feature of the situation in the West into account means leading the cause of the communist movement to certain doom.

Over there, in the West, there are still individual “Communists” who refuse to understand this specific feature and continue to make play with the anti-proletarian and anti revolutionary slogan: “Leave the trade unions!” It must be said that nobody can do more harm to the communist movement in the West than these and similar “Communists.” Regarding the trade unions as an enemy camp, these people contemplate “attacking” them from without. They fail to understand that if they pursue such a policy the workers will indeed regard them as enemies. They fail to understand that the trade unions, whether good or bad, are regarded by the rank-and-file worker as his fortresses, which help him to protect his wages, hours, and so forth. They fail to understand that such a policy, far from facilitating, hinders Communists from penetrating among the vast working-class masses.

The average rank-and-file worker may say to such “Communists”: “You are attacking my fortress. You want to wreck the organisations that took me decades to build, and are trying to prove to me that communism is better than trade-unionism. I don't know, perhaps your theoretical arguments

about communism are right. How can I, an ordinary working man, grasp the meaning of your theories? But one thing I do know: I have my tradeunion fortresses; they have led me into the struggle, they have protected me, well or ill, from the attacks of the capitalists, and whoever thinks of destroying these fortresses wants to destroy my own cause, the workers' cause.

Stop attacking my fortresses, join the trade unions, work in them for five years or so, help to improve and strengthen them. In the meantime I shall see what sort of fellows you are, and if you turn out to be real good fellows, I, of course, will not refuse to support you," and so forth.

That is the attitude, or approximately the attitude, of the average rank-and-file workers in the West today towards the anti-trade-unionists.

Whoever fails to understand this specific feature of the mentality of the average worker in Europe will understand nothing about the position of our Communist Parties at the present time.

Wherein lies the strength of Social-Democracy in the West?

In the fact that it has the backing of the trade unions.

Wherein lies the weakness of our Communist Parties in the West?

In the fact that they have not yet linked up with the trade unions, and certain elements in these Communist Parties do not wish to link up with them.

Hence, the main task of the Communist Parties in the West at the present time is to develop and bring to a successful conclusion the campaign for trade-union unity, to see that all Communists without exception join the trade unions, to work in them systematically and patiently for uniting the working class against capital, and in this way to enable the Communist Parties to have the backing of the trade unions.

Such is the meaning of the decisions of the enlarged plenum of the Comintern concerning the immediate tasks of the Communist Parties in the West at the present time.



### "Questions and Answers"

- Speech Delivered at the Sverdlov University

June 9, 1925

Indicate the greatest forthcoming difficulties in our Party and Soviet affairs arising from stabilisation and

the delay of the world revolution, especially difficulties in the sphere of the relations between the Party and the working class, and between the working class and the peasantry.

The fifth difficulty. This consists of the danger of a partial divorce of the Party organisations and trade unions from the broad working-class masses, from the needs and requirements of these masses. That danger arises and develops as a result of the domination of bureaucratic elements in

quite a number of Party and trade-union bodies, not excluding Party units and factory committees. That danger has increased lately owing to the slogan "face to the countryside," which has shifted the attention of our organisations from the town to the country, from the proletariat to the peasantry. Many comrades have failed to understand that when turning to face the countryside they must not turn their backs on the proletariat, that the slogan "face to the countryside" can be implemented only through the medium of the proletariat and with the forces of the proletariat, that inattention to the requirements of the working class can only increase the danger of the Party and trade-union organisations becoming divorced from the masses of the workers.

What are the signs of this danger?

Firstly, loss of sensitiveness and inadequate attention of our Party and trade-union organisations to the requirements and needs of the broad working-class masses; secondly, failure to understand that the workers now have a higher sense of dignity and a sense of being the ruling class, that they will not understand or tolerate a bureaucratic attitude on the part of Party and trade-union organisations; thirdly, failure to understand that one should not thrust oneself on the workers with ill-considered orders, that attention must now be focussed not on such "measures," but on winning for the Party the confidence of the whole working class; fourthly, failure to understand that no measures at all extensive affecting the masses of the workers (for example, going over to the three-loom system in the textile area) should be carried out without first conducting a campaign among the workers, without first holding broad production conferences.

All this results in a number of Party and trade-union organisations becoming divorced from the broad working-class masses and in conflicts in the factories. As is known, the conflicts which flared up in the textile area recently revealed the existence of all these evils in a number of our Party and trade-union organisations.

Such are the characteristic features of the fifth difficulty on our path of development.

To overcome these difficulties it is necessary above all to rid our Party and trade-union organisations of the manifestly bureaucratic elements, to set about renewing the composition of the factory committees, to revive without fail the production conferences, to centre Party work on the large Party units in industrial enterprises and to assign the best Party workers to them.

More attention and thought to the requirements and needs of the working class, less bureaucratic formalism in the practical work of our Party and trade-union organisations, more sensitiveness and responsiveness to the sense of class dignity of the working class — such is now the task.



Interview with the Participants  
in the Conference of Agitation and  
Propaganda Departments

October 14, 1925

Question. Will not the growing Left-wing movement in the Western trade unions lead to some part of the proletariat becoming divorced from the Communist Parties?

Answer. No, it should not. On the contrary, the swing of the trade unions to the Left should strengthen the influence of the Communist Parties in the working-class movement. The social-reformists are strong in the working-class movement not only, and even not so much, because they have Social-Democratic parties at their command, but mainly because they have the backing of the workers' trade unions. It will be enough to deprive them of this backing for them to be left hanging in midair. The swing of the trade unions to the Left means that a considerable section of the organised workers is beginning to desert the old, reformist leaders and is seeking new, Left leaders. The mistake that the Communist Parties make is that they fail to understand this beneficent process, and instead of offering a hand to the Social-Democratic workers who are moving to the Left and helping them to extricate themselves from the mire, they begin to abuse them as traitors and repel them.

It must be borne in mind that the situation as regards the trade unions in the West is different from what it is here, in our country. Here, the trade unions arose after the Party had appeared, after the Party had already become strong and had gained great prestige among the workers. Here, the trade unions were implanted and organised by the efforts of the Party, under the leadership of the Party, with the assistance of the Party. It is this, incidentally, that explains the fact that, here, the Party's prestige among the workers is much higher than that of the trade unions. We see an entirely different picture in the West. There, the trade unions arose much earlier than the working-class political parties. There were no parties yet in the West when the trade unions were leading the workers in strikes, organising them and helping them to defend their interests in the struggle against the capitalists. More than that. There, the parties arose out of the trade unions. It is this, incidentally, that explains the fact that the trade unions in the West enjoy much more prestige among the masses than the parties. Whether the trade unions and their leaders there are good or bad, one thing is clear, namely, that the workers regard the trade unions as their bastions against the capitalists. All these specific features must be taken into account when exposing the reformist trade-union leaders. Hurling abuse and violent epithets at the reformist leaders will not help. On the contrary, abuse and violent epithets can only create the impression among the workers that the aim is not to secure the removal of bad leaders, but to wreck the trade unions.

1926

[Volume 8](#)



Concerning Questions of Leninism

Dedicated to the Leningrad  
Organisation of the C.P.S.U.(B.)

January 25, 1926

V

THE PARTY AND THE WORKING CLASS IN THE SYSTEM OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF  
THE PROLETARIAT

Now we must say something about the dictatorship of the proletariat from the point of view of its structure, from the point of view of its "mechanism," from the point of view of the role and significance of the "transmission belts," the "levers," and the "directing force" which in their totality constitute "the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat" (Lenin ), and with the help of which the daily work of the dictatorship of the proletariat is accomplished.

What are these "transmission belts" or "levers" in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat? What is this "directing force"? Why are they needed?

The levers or transmission belts are those very mass organisations of the proletariat without the aid of which the dictatorship cannot be realised.

The directing force is the advanced detachment of the proletariat, its vanguard, which is the main guiding force of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The proletariat needs these transmission belts, these levers, and this directing force, because without them, in its struggle for victory, it would be a weaponless army in face of organised and armed capital. The proletariat needs these organisations because without them it would suffer inevitable defeat in its fight for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, in its fight for the consolidation of its rule, in its fight for the building of socialism. The systematic help of these organisations and the directing force of the vanguard are needed because in the absence of these conditions it is impossible for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be at all durable and firm.

What are these organisations?

Firstly, there are the workers' trade unions, with their central and local ramifications in the shape of a whole series of organisations concerned with production, culture, education, etc. These unite the workers of all trades. They are non-Party organisations. The trade unions may be termed the all-embracing organisation of the working class, which is in power in our country. They are a school of communism. They promote the best people from their midst for the work of leadership in all branches of administration. They form the link between the advanced and the backward elements in the ranks of the working class. They connect the masses of the workers with the vanguard of the working class.

\* \* \*

To sum up: the trade unions, as the mass organization of the proletariat, linking the Party with the class primarily in the sphere of production;

Without the Party as the main guiding force, it is impossible for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be at all durable and firm.



Thus, in the words of Lenin, "taken as a whole, we have a formally non-Communist, flexible and relatively wide, and very powerful proletarian apparatus, by means of which the Party is closely linked with the class and with the masses, and by means of which, under the leadership of the Party, the dictatorship of the class is exercised."

Of course, this must not be understood in the sense that the Party can or should take the place of the trade unions, the Soviets, and the other mass organizations. The Party exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, it exercises it not directly, but with the help of the trade unions, and through the Soviets and their ramifications. Without these "transmission belts," it would be impossible for the dictatorship to be at all firm.

"It is impossible to exercise the dictatorship," says Lenin, "without having a number of 'transmission belts' from the vanguard to the mass of the advanced class, and from the latter to the mass of the working people."

"The Party, so to speak, draws into its ranks the vanguard of the proletariat, and this vanguard exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without a foundation like the trade unions the dictatorship cannot be exercised, state functions cannot be fulfilled. And these functions have to be exercised through a number of special institutions also of a new type, namely, through the Soviet apparatus."

Not a single important decision is arrived at by the mass organizations of the proletariat without guiding directives from the Party. That is perfectly true. But does that mean that the dictatorship of the proletariat consists entirely of the guiding directives given by the Party? Does that mean that, in view of this, the guiding directives of the Party can be identified with the dictatorship of the proletariat? Of course not. The dictatorship of the proletariat consists of the guiding directives of the Party plus the carrying out of these directives by the mass organizations of the proletariat, plus their fulfilment by the population. Here, as you see, we have to deal with a whole series of transitions and intermediary steps which are by no means unimportant elements of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hence, between the guiding directives of the Party and their fulfilment lie the will and actions of those who are led, the will and actions of the class, its willingness (or unwillingness) to support such directives, its ability (or inability) to carry out these directives, its ability (or inability) to carry them out in strict accordance with the demands of the situation. It scarcely needs proof that the Party, having taken the leadership into its hands, cannot but reckon with the will, the condition, the level of political consciousness of those who are led, cannot leave out of account the will, the condition, and level of political consciousness of its class. Therefore, whoever identifies the leading role of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes the directives given by the Party for the will and actions of the class. It has never happened that the Party, the Party alone, has undertaken all these actions with only its own forces, without the support of the class. Usually it only directs these actions, and it can direct them only to the extent that it has the support of the class. For the Party cannot cover, cannot replace the class. For, despite all its important leading role, the Party still remains a part of the class. Therefore, whoever identifies the leading role of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes the Party for the class.

Whoever attributes to the Party the function, which it does not possess, of employing force against the working class as a whole, violates the elementary requirements of correct mutual relations between the vanguard and the class, between the Party and the proletariat.

Thus, we have come right up to the question of the mutual relations between the Party and the class, between Party and non-Party members of the working class.

Lenin defines these mutual relations as "mutual confidence" between the vanguard of the working

class and the mass of the workers."

What does this mean?

It means, firstly, that the Party must closely heed the voice of the masses; that it must pay careful attention to the revolutionary instinct of the masses; that it must study the practice of the struggle of the masses and on this basis test the correctness of its own policy; that, consequently, it must not only teach the masses, but also learn from them.

It means, secondly, that the Party must day by day win the confidence of the proletarian masses; that it must by its policy and work secure the support of the masses; that it must not command but primarily convince the masses, helping them to realize through their own experience the correctness of the policy of the Party; that, consequently, it must be the guide, the leader and teacher of its class.

To violate these conditions means to upset the correct mutual relations between the vanguard and the class, to undermine "mutual confidence," to shatter both class and Party discipline.

1) the prestige of the Party and the iron discipline within the working class that are necessary for the dictatorship of the proletariat are built up not on fear or on "unrestricted" rights of the Party, but on the confidence of the working class in the Party, on the support which the Party receives from the working class;

2) the confidence of the working class in the Party is not acquired at one stroke, and not by means of force against the working class, but by the Party's prolonged work among the masses, by the correct policy of the Party, by the ability of the Party to convince the masses through their own experience of the correctness of its policy, by the ability of the Party to secure the support of the working class and to take the lead of the masses of the working class;

3) without a correct Party policy, reinforced by the experience of the struggle of the masses, and without the confidence of the working class, there is not and cannot be real leadership by the Party;

4) the Party and its leadership, if the Party enjoys the confidence of the class, and if this leadership is real leadership, cannot be counterposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat, because without the leadership of the Party (the "dictatorship" of the Party), enjoying the confidence of the working class, it is impossible for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be at all firm.

Without these conditions, the prestige of the Party and iron discipline within the working class are either empty phrases or boastfulness and adventurism.

Various groups and factions in our Party have come to grief and disappeared because they violated one of these three conditions, and sometimes all these conditions taken together.

But it follows from this that counterposing the dictatorship of the proletariat to the "dictatorship" (leadership) of the Party can be regarded as incorrect only:

1) if by dictatorship of the Party in relation to the working class we mean not a dictatorship in the proper sense of the word ("power based on the use of force"), but the leadership of the Party, which precludes the use of force against the working class as a whole, against its majority, precisely as Lenin meant it;

2) if the Party has the qualifications to be the real leader of the class, i.e., if the Party's policy is correct, if this policy accords with the interests of the class;

3) if the class, if the majority of the class, accepts that policy, makes that policy its own, becomes convinced, as a result of the work of the Party, that that policy is correct, has confidence in the Party and supports it.

The violation of these conditions inevitably gives rise to a conflict between the Party and the class, to a split between them, to their being counterposed to each other.

What does leadership mean when the policy of the Party is correct and the correct relations between the vanguard and the class are not upset?

Leadership under these circumstances means the ability to convince the masses of the correctness of the Party's policy; the ability to put forward and to carry out such slogans as bring the masses to the Party's positions and help them to realize through their own experience the correctness of the Party's policy; the ability to raise the masses to the Party's level of political consciousness, and thus secure the support of the masses and their readiness for the decisive struggle.

Well, and what is to be done with the minority, if it does not wish, if it does not agree voluntarily to submit to the will of the majority? Can the Party, must the Party, enjoying the confidence of the majority, compel the minority to submit to the will of the majority? Yes, it can and it must. Leadership is ensured by the method of persuading the masses, as the principal method by which the Party influences the masses. This, however, does not preclude, but presupposes, the use of coercion, if such coercion is based on confidence in the Party and support for it on the part of the majority of the working class, if it is applied to the minority after the Party has convinced the majority.

Here is what Lenin said at that time, at the Tenth Congress of the Party, in his speech on the trade unions:

"In order to establish mutual relations and mutual confidence between the vanguard of the working class and the masses of the workers, it was necessary, if the Tsektran had made a mistake . . . to correct this mistake. But when people begin to defend this mistake, it becomes a source of political danger. Had not the utmost possible been done in the way of democracy in heeding the moods expressed here by Kutuzov, we would have met with political bankruptcy. First we must convince, and then coerce. We must at all costs first convince, and then coerce. We were not able to convince the broad masses, and we upset the correct relations between the vanguard and the masses."

Lenin says the same thing in his pamphlet *On the Trade Unions*:

"We applied coercion correctly and successfully only when we were able to create beforehand a basis of conviction for it."

And that is quite true, for without those conditions no leadership is possible. For only in that way can we ensure unity of action in the Party, if we are speaking of the Party, or unity of action of the class, if we are speaking of the class as a whole. Without this there is splitting, confusion and demoralization in the ranks of the working class.

Such in general are the fundamentals of correct leadership of the working class by the Party.

Any other conception of leadership is syndicalism, anarchism, bureaucracy -- anything you please, but not Bolshevism, not Leninism.

"Among the mass of the people we (the Communists --J. St.) are after all but a drop in the ocean, and we can administer only when we properly express what the people are conscious of. Unless we do this the Communist Party will not lead the proletariat, the proletariat will not lead the masses, and the whole machine will collapse."



Speech Delivered at the French Commission of the Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

(March 6, 1926)

The second question is the growing danger from the Right within the Party. I believe that both around and within the French Communist Party there is an already fairly solid militant group of Rights, headed by individuals expelled or not expelled from the Party, a group which all the time will be sapping the Party's strength. I have just been talking to Crémét. He told me something new: he said that not only in the Party, but also in the trade unions there are groups of Rights who are working surreptitiously, and here and there are conducting an outright attack on the revolutionary wing of the Communist Party.

The fourth question is that of the workers' trade unions in France. I have gained the impression that some French comrades take this matter too lightly. I admit that errors have been committed by representatives of the trade-union Confederation, but I admit also that errors have been committed by the Central Committee of the French Communist Party in regard to the Confederation. It is quite natural that Comrade Monmousseau would like the Party to exercise less tutelage. That is in the nature of things, since there are two parallel organisations—the Party and the trade-union Confederation—and at times there is bound to be a certain amount of friction between them. This also happens with us, the Russians, and in all Communist Parties—it is unavoidable. But the less the Central Committee of the French Communist Party intrudes in every detail of trade-union affairs, the less friction will there be. The trade unions should be led by Communists who work permanently in the trade unions, and not independently of them. There have been instances of hypertrophy in the leadership of the trade unions in our Party, the Russian Party. You can find in the records of our Party quite a number of resolutions adopted by our Party congresses laying down that the Party should not exercise tutelage over the trade unions—that it should guide them, not exercise tutelage over them. I am afraid that the French Party—I trust the comrades will forgive me for saying so—has also sinned somewhat against the trade unions in this respect. I consider the Party the highest form of organisation of the working class, and precisely for this reason more must be demanded of it. Consequently, the errors of the Central Committee must be eliminated in the first place, so that relations with the trade unions may be improved and strengthened, and so that Comrade Monmousseau and the other trade-union leaders may be in a position to work along the lines required from the point of view of the Communist Party.

The Party cannot develop further, especially in the conditions existing in the West, the Party cannot grow stronger, if it does not have a very important bulwark in the shape of the trade unions and their leaders. Only a party that knows how to maintain extensive connections with the trade unions and their leaders, and which knows how to establish genuine proletarian contact with them—only such a party can win over the majority of the working class in the West. You know yourselves that without winning over the majority of the working class, it is impossible to count on victory.

Well then, what do we find?

We find that:

- a) France is moving towards a crisis;
- b) sensing this crisis and fearing it, the Right-wing elements are raising their head and trying to drag the Party back;
- c) the immediate task of the Party is to eliminate the Right danger, to isolate the Rights;
- d) in order to isolate the Rights, a concentration is needed of all the genuinely communist leaders within the leadership of the Party who are capable of waging a fight against the Rights to a finish;
- e) in order that the concentration of forces may yield the desired results in the fight against the Rights and in preparing the workers for the revolutionary crisis, it is necessary that the leading group should have the backing of the trade unions and should be able to maintain proletarian contact with the trade unions and their officials;
- f) there should be no infatuation in practical work for the method of amputation, the method of repressive measures against individual comrades, but that use must be made chiefly of the method of persuasion.



### The British Strike and the Events in Poland

Report Delivered at a Meeting of Workers of the Chief Railway Workshops in Tiflis

June 8, 1926

For, as history has shown, a general strike which is not turned into a political struggle must inevitably fail.

Fifthly. The general staff of the British capitalists understood that international support of the

British strike would be a mortal danger to the bourgeoisie. The General Council, on the other hand, did not understand, or pretended not to understand, that the strike of the British workers could only be won by means of international proletarian solidarity. Hence the refusal of the General Council to accept financial assistance from the workers of the Soviet Union and other countries.

Such a gigantic strike as the general strike in Britain could have yielded tangible results if, at least, two fundamental conditions had been observed, namely, if it had been turned into a political struggle, and if it had been made an action in the struggle of the proletarians of all the advanced countries against capital. But, in its own peculiar “wisdom,” the British General Council rejected both these two conditions, thereby predetermining the failure of the general strike.

Sixthly. There is no doubt that a role of no little importance was played by the more than equivocal behaviour of the Second International and the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions in the matter of aiding the British general strike. In point of fact, the platonic resolutions of these organisations of Social-Democrats on aiding the strike were actually tantamount, to a refusal of any financial aid. For in no other way than by the equivocal conduct of the Social-Democratic International is it possible to explain the fact that all the trade unions of Europe and America together donated not more than one-eighth of the amount of financial aid which the trade unions of the Soviet Union found it possible to afford their British brothers. I say nothing of aid of another kind, in the form of stopping the transport of coal, a matter in which the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions is literally acting as a strikebreaker.

### LESSONS OF THE GENERAL STRIKE

What are the lessons of the general strike in Britain—at least, the most important of them? They are the following.

Firstly. The crisis in the British coal industry and the general strike connected with it bluntly raise the question of socialising the instruments and means of production in the coal industry, with the establishment of workers’ control. That is a question of winning socialism. It scarcely needs proof that there are not and cannot be any other ways of radically solving the crisis in the coal industry other than the way proposed by the British Communist Party. The crisis in the coal industry and the general strike bring the British working class squarely up against the question of the practical realisation of socialism.

Secondly. The British working class could not but learn from its experience at first hand that the chief obstacle in the way to its goal is the political power of the capitalists, in this case, the Conservative Party and its government. Whereas the T.U.C. General Council feared like the plague to admit the inseparable connection between the economic struggle and the political struggle, the British workers cannot now fail to understand that, in their difficult struggle against organised capital, the basic question now is that of power, and that until it is settled, it is impossible to solve either the crisis in the coal industry or the crisis in the whole of British industry in general.

Thirdly. The course and outcome of the general strike cannot but convince the British working class that Parliament, the constitution, the king and the other attributes of bourgeois rule are nothing but a shield of the capitalist class against the proletariat. The strike tore the camouflage of a fetish and inviolable shrine both from Parliament and from the constitution. The workers will realise that the present constitution is a weapon of the bourgeoisie against the workers. The workers are bound to understand that they, too, need their own workers’ constitution, as a weapon against the bourgeoisie. I think that the learning of this truth will be a most important achievement of the British working class.

Fourthly. The course and outcome of the strike cannot but convince the British working masses of the unsuitability of the old leaders, of the unsuitability of the old functionaries, who grew up in the school of the old British policy of compromise. They cannot but realise that the old leaders must be replaced by new, revolutionary leaders.

Fifthly. The British workers cannot but realise now that the miners of Britain are the advanced detachment of the British working class, and that it is therefore the concern of the entire British working class to support the miners' strike and ensure its victory. The whole course of the strike brings home to the British working class the absolutely unassailable truth of this lesson.

Sixthly. The British workers could not but be convinced in the difficult moment of the general strike, when the platforms and programmes of the various parties were being tested in action, that the only party capable of boldly and resolutely upholding the interests of the working class to the end is the Communist Party.

Such, in general, are the principal lessons of the general strike in Britain.

### SOME CONCLUSIONS

I pass on to a few conclusions of practical importance.

The first question is that of the stabilisation of capitalism. The strike in Britain has shown that the resolution of the Communist International on the temporary and insecure character of stabilisation is absolutely correct. The attack of British capital on the British miners was an attempt to transform the temporary, insecure stabilisation into a firm and permanent one. That attempt did not succeed, and could not have succeeded. The British workers, who replied to that attempt by a gigantic strike, have shown the whole capitalist world that the firm stabilisation of capitalism in the conditions of the post-war period is impossible, that experiments like the British one are fraught with the danger of the destruction of the foundations of capitalism. But if it is wrong to assume that the stabilisation of capitalism is firm, it is equally wrong to assume the contrary, namely, that stabilisation has come to an end, that it has been done away with, and that we have now entered a period when revolutionary storms will reach their climax. The stabilisation of capitalism is temporary and insecure, but it is stabilisation nevertheless, and so far still remains.

Further, precisely because the present temporary and insecure stabilisation still remains, for that very reason capital will persist in attempts to attack the working class. Of course, the British strike should have taught the entire capitalist world how risky experiments like the one made by the Conservative Party in Britain are for the life and existence of capitalism. That the experiment will not be without its cost for the Conservative Party, that is scarcely open to doubt. Neither can it be doubted that this lesson will be taken into account by the capitalists of all countries. All the same, capital will attempt fresh attacks on the working class, because it senses its insecurity and cannot but feel the need to establish itself more securely. The task of the working class and of the Communist Parties is to prepare their forces to repel such attacks on the working class. The task of the Communist Parties is, while continuing the organisation of the united working-class front, to bend all their efforts to convert the attacks of the capitalists into a counter-attack of the working class, into a revolutionary offensive of the working class, into a struggle of the working class for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the abolition of capitalism.

Lastly, if the working class of Britain is to accomplish these immediate tasks, the first thing it must do is to get rid of its present leaders. You cannot go to war against the capitalists if you have such leaders as the Thomases and MacDonalds. You cannot hope for victory if you have traitors like

Henderson and Clynes in your rear. The British working class must learn to replace such leaders by better ones. For one thing or the other: either the British working class will learn to dismiss the Thomases and MacDonalds from their posts, or it will no more see victory than it can see its own ears.

Those, comrades, are a few conclusions which suggest themselves.

Works of Stalin 1926



#### The Anglo-Russian Unity Committee<sup>1</sup>

Speech Delivered at a Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission,  
C.P.S.U.(B.), July 15, 1926;

J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 8, January-November, 1926.

Comrades, we are passing through a period of the accumulation of forces, a period of winning over the masses and of preparing the proletariat for new battles. But the masses are in the trade unions. And in the West the trade unions, the majority of them, are now more or less reactionary. What, then, should be our attitude towards the trade unions? Should we, can we, as Communists, work in the reactionary trade unions? It is essentially this question that Trotsky put to us in his letter recently published in Pravda. There is nothing new, of course, in this question. It was raised before Trotsky by the "ultra-Lefts" in Germany, some five years ago. But Trotsky has seen fit to raise it again. How does he answer it? Permit me to quote a passage from Trotsky's letter:

"The entire present 'superstructure' of the British working class, in all its shades and groupings without exception, is an apparatus for putting a brake on the revolution. This presages for a long time to come the pressure of the spontaneous and semi-spontaneous movement on the framework of the old organisations and the formation of new, revolutionary organisations as the result of this pressure" (see Pravda, No. 119, May 26, 1926).

It follows from this that we ought not to work in the "old" organisations, if we do not want to "retard" the revolution. Either what is meant here is that we are already in the period of a direct revolutionary situation and ought at once to set up self-authorised organisations of the proletariat in place of the "old" ones, in place of the trade unions -- which, of course, is incorrect and foolish. Or what is meant here is that "for a long time to come" we ought to work to replace the old trade unions by "new, revolutionary organisations."

This is a signal to organise, in place of the existing trade unions, that same "Revolutionary Workers' Union" which the "ultra-Left" Communists in Germany advocated some five years ago, and which



Comrade Lenin vigorously opposed in his pamphlet "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder. It is in point of fact a signal to replace the present trade unions by "new," supposedly "revolutionary" organisations, a signal, consequently, to withdraw from the trade unions.

Is that policy correct? It is fundamentally incorrect. It is fundamentally incorrect because it runs counter to the Leninist method of leading the masses. It is incorrect because, for all their reactionary character, the trade unions of the West are the most elementary organisations of the proletariat, those best understood by the most backward workers, and therefore the most comprehensive organisations of the proletariat. We cannot find our way to the masses, we cannot win them over if we by-pass these trade unions. To adopt Trotsky's standpoint would mean that the road to the vast masses would be barred to the Communists, that the working-class masses would be handed over to the tender mercies of Amsterdam<sup>3</sup>, to the tender mercies of the Sassenbachs and the Oudegeests.<sup>4</sup>

The oppositionists here have quoted Comrade Lenin. Allow me, too, to quote what Lenin said:

"We cannot but regard also as ridiculous and childish nonsense the pompous, very learned, and frightfully revolutionary talk of the German Lefts to the effect that Communists cannot and should not work in reactionary trade unions, that it is permissible to turn down such work, that it is necessary to leave the trade unions and to create without fail a brand-new, immaculate 'Workers' Union' invented by very nice (and, probably, for the most part very youthful) Communists" (see Vol. XXV, pp. 193-94).

And further:

"We wage the struggle against the 'labour aristocracy' in the name of the masses of the workers and in order to win them to our side; we wage the struggle against the opportunist and social-chauvinist leaders in order to win the working class to our side. To forget this most elementary and most self-evident truth would be stupid. And it is precisely this stupidity that the German 'Left' Communists are guilty of when, because of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the trade-union top leadership, they jump to the conclusion that -- we must leave the trade unions!! that we must refuse to work in them!! that we must create new, artificial forms of labour organisation!! This is such unpardonable stupidity that it is equivalent to the greatest service the Communists could render the bourgeoisie" (ibid., p. 196).

I think, comrades, that comment is superfluous.

This raises the question of skipping over the reactionary character of the trade unions in the West, which has not yet been outlived. This question was brought forward at the rostrum here by Zinoviev. He quoted Martov and assured us that the point of view opposed to skipping over, the point of view that it is not permissible for Marxists to skip over and ignore the backwardness of the masses, the backwardness and reactionariness of their leaders, is a Menshevik point of view.

I affirm, comrades, that this unscrupulous manoeuvre of Zinoviev's in citing Martov is evidence of one thing only -- Zinoviev's complete departure from the Leninist line.

I shall endeavour to prove this in what follows.

Can we, as Leninists, as Marxists, at all skip over and ignore a movement that has not outlived its day, can we skip over and ignore the backwardness of the masses, can we turn our back on them and pass them by; or ought we to get rid of such features by carrying on an unrelaxing fight against them among the masses? That is one of the fundamental questions of communist policy, one of the fundamental questions of Leninist leadership of the masses. The oppositionists spoke here of

Leninism. Let us turn to the prime source, to Lenin.

It was in April 1917. Lenin was in controversy with Kamenev. Lenin did not agree with Kamenev, who overestimated the role of petty-bourgeois democracy. But Lenin was not in agreement with Trotsky either, who underestimated the role of the peasant movement and "skipped over" the peasant movement in Russia. Here are Lenin's words:

"Trotskyism says: 'No tsar, but a workers' government.' That is incorrect. The petty bourgeoisie exists, and it cannot be left out of account. But it consists of two sections. The poorer section follows the working class" (see Lenin's speech in the minutes of the Petrograd Conference of April 1917, p. 175).

"Now, if we were to say, 'no tsar, but a dictatorship of the proletariat,' that would be skipping over \* the petty bourgeoisie" (see Lenin's speech in the minutes of the All-Russian Conference of April 1917, p. 766).

And further:

"But are we not incurring the danger of succumbing to subjectivism, of desiring to 'skip over' the uncompleted bourgeois-democratic revolution -- which has not yet outlived the peasant movement -- to a socialist revolution? I should be incurring that danger if I had said: 'No tsar, but a workers' government.' But I did not say that; I said something else. . . . I absolutely insured myself in my theses against any skipping over the peasant movement, or the petty-bourgeois movement generally, which has not yet outlived its day, against any playing at the 'seizure of power' by a workers' government, against Blanquist adventurism in any shape or form, for I pointed directly to the experience of the Paris Commune" (see Vol. XX, p. 104).

That is clear, one would think. The theory of skipping over a movement which has not outlived its day is a Trotskyist theory. Lenin does not agree with this theory. He considers it an adventurist one.

And here are a few more quotations, this time from other writings -- from those of a "very prominent" Bolshevik whose name I do not want to mention for the present, but who also takes up arms against the skipping-over theory.

"In the question of the peasantry, which Trotsky is always trying to 'skip over,' we would have committed the most egregious blunders. Instead of the beginnings of a bond with the peasants, there would now be thoroughgoing estrangement from them."

Further:

"Such is the 'theoretical' foundation of Parvusism and Trotskyism. This 'theoretical' foundation was later minted into political slogans, such as: 'no tsar, but a workers' government.' This slogan sounds very plausible now that after a lapse of fifteen years we have achieved Soviet power in alliance with the peasantry. No tsar -- that's fine! A workers' government -- better still! But if it be recalled that this slogan was put forward in 1905, every Bolshevik will agree that at that time it meant 'skipping over' the peasantry altogether."

Further:

"But in 1905 the 'permanentists' wanted to foist on us the slogan: 'Down with the tsar and up with a workers' government!' But what about the peasantry? Does it not stare one in the face, this complete non-comprehension and ignoring of the peasantry in a country like Russia? If this is not 'skipping

over' the peasantry, then what is it?"

Further:

"Failing to understand the role of the peasantry in Russia, 'skipping over' the peasantry in a peasant country, Trotskyism was all the more incapable of understanding the role of the peasantry in the international revolution."

Who, you will ask, is the author of these formidable passages against Trotskyism and the Trotskyist skipping-over theory? The author of these formidable passages is none other than Zinoviev. They are taken from his book *Leninism*, and from his article "Bolshevism or Trotskyism?"

How could it happen that a year ago Zinoviev realised the anti-Leninist character of the skipping-over theory, but has ceased to realise it now, a year later? The reason is that he was then, so to speak, a Leninist, but has now got himself hopelessly bogged, with one leg in Trotskyism and the other in Shlyapnikovism, in the "Workers' Opposition."<sup>7</sup> And here he is, floundering between these two oppositions, and compelled now to speak here from this rostrum, quoting Martov. Against whom is he speaking? Against Lenin. And for whom is he speaking? For the Trotskyists.

To such depths has Zinoviev fallen.

It may be said that all this concerns the question of the peasantry, but has no bearing on the British trade unions. But that is not so, comrades. What has been said about the unsuitability in politics of the skipping-over theory has a direct bearing on the trade unions in Britain, and in Europe generally; it has a direct bearing on the question of leadership of the masses, on the question of the ways and means of emancipating them from the influence of reactionary, reformist leaders. Pursuing their skipping-over theory, Trotsky and Zinoviev are trying to skip over the backwardness, the reactionariness of the British trade unions, trying to get us to overthrow the General Council from Moscow, without the British trade-union masses. But we affirm that such a policy is stupidity, adventurism; that the reactionary leaders of the British trade-union movement must be overthrown by the British trade-union masses themselves, with our help ; that we must not skip over the reactionary character of the trade-union leaders, but must help the British trade-union masses to get rid of it.

You will see that there certainly is a connection between policy in general and policy towards the trade-union masses.

Has Lenin anything on this point?

Listen to this:

"The trade unions were a tremendous step forward for the working class in the early days of capitalist development, as marking the transition from the disunity and helplessness of the workers to the rudiments of class organisation. When the highest form of proletarian class association began to develop, viz., the revolutionary party of the proletariat (which will not deserve the name until it learns to bind the leaders with the class and the masses into one single indissoluble whole), the trade unions inevitably began to reveal certain reactionary features, a certain craft narrowness, a certain tendency to be non-political, a certain inertness, etc. But the development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through interaction between them and the party of the working class' (see Vol. XXV, p. 194). [Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder. VI. Should Revolutionaries Work in Reactionary Trade Unions? (1920)]

And further:

"To fear this 'reactionariness,' to try to avoid it, to skip over it, is the height of folly, for it means fearing that role of the proletarian vanguard which consists in training, educating, enlightening and drawing into the new life the most backward strata and masses of the working class and peasantry" (ibid., p. 195).

That is how matters stand with the skipping-over theory as applied to the trade-union movement.

Zinoviev would have done better not to come forward here quoting Martov. He would have done better to say nothing about the skipping-over theory. That would have been much better for his own sake. There was no need for Zinoviev to swear by Trotsky: we know as it is that he has deserted Leninism for Trotskyism.

That is how matters stand, comrades, with the Trotskyist theory of skipping over the backwardness of the trade unions, the backwardness of the trade-union movement, and the backwardness of the mass movement in general.

Leninism is one thing, Trotskyism is another.

This brings us to the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee. It has been said here that the Anglo-Russian Committee is an agreement, a bloc between the trade unions of our country and the British trade unions. That is perfectly true. The Anglo-Russian Committee is the expression of a bloc, of an agreement between our unions and the British unions, and this bloc is not without its political character.

This bloc sets itself two tasks. The first is to establish contact between our trade unions and the British trade unions, to organise a united movement against the capitalist offensive to widen the fissure between Amsterdam and the British trade union movement, a fissure which exists and which we shall widen in every way, and, lastly, to bring about the conditions essential for ousting the reformists from the trade unions and for winning over the trade unions of the capitalist countries to the side of communism.

The second task of the bloc is to organise a broad movement of the working class against new imperialist wars in general, and against intervention in our country by (especially) the most powerful of the European imperialist powers, by Britain in particular.

The first task was discussed here at adequate length, and, therefore, I shall not dwell upon it. I should like to say a few words here about the second task, especially as regards intervention in our country by the British imperialists. Some of the oppositionists say that this second task of the bloc between our trade unions and the British is not worth talking about, that it is of no importance. Why, one asks? Why is it not worth talking about? Is not the task of safeguarding the security of the first Soviet Republic in the world, which is moreover the bulwark and base of the international revolution, a revolutionary task? Are our trade unions independent of the Party? Is our view that of the independence of our trade unions -- that the state is one thing, and the trade unions another? No, as Leninists, we do not and cannot hold that view. It should be the concern of every worker, of every worker organised in a trade union, to protect the first Soviet Republic in the world from intervention. And if in this the trade unions of our country have the support of the British trade unions, although they are reformist unions, is that not obviously something to be welcomed?

Those who think that our unions cannot deal with state matters go over to the standpoint of

Menshevism. That is the standpoint of Sotsialisticheskyy Vestnik.<sup>8</sup> It is not one we can accept. And if the reactionary trade unions of Britain are prepared to join with the revolutionary trade unions of our country in a bloc against the counter-revolutionary imperialists of their country, why should we not welcome such a bloc? I stress this aspect of the matter in order that our opposition may at last understand that in trying to torpedo the Anglo-Russian Committee it is playing into the hands of the interventionists.

Hence, the Anglo-Russian Committee is a bloc of our trade unions with the reactionary trade unions of Britain, the object of which is, firstly, to strengthen the connections between our trade unions and the trade-union movement of the West and to revolutionise the latter, and, secondly, to wage a struggle against imperialist wars in general, and intervention in particular.

But -- and this is a question of principle -- are political blocs with reactionary trade unions possible at all? Are such blocs permissible at all for Communists?

This question faces us squarely, and we have to answer it here. There are some people -- our oppositionists -- who consider such blocs impossible. The Central Committee of our Party, however, considers them permissible.

The oppositionists have invoked here the name of Lenin. Let us turn to Lenin:

"Capitalism would not be capitalism if the 'pure' proletariat were not surrounded by a mass of exceedingly motley intermediate types between the proletarian and the semi-proletarian (who earns his livelihood in part by the sale of his labour power), between the semi-proletarian and the small peasant (and the petty artisan, handicraft worker and small proprietor in general), between the small peasant and the middle peasant, and so on, and if the proletariat itself were not divided into more developed and less developed strata, if it were not divided according to place of birth, trade, sometimes according to religion, and so on. And from all this follows the necessity, the absolute necessity for the vanguard of the proletariat, for its class-conscious section, for the Communist Party, to resort to manoeuvres, arrangements and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small proprietors. The whole point lies in knowing how to apply these tactics in order to raise, and not lower, the general level of proletarian political consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win" (see Vol. XXV, p. 213).

And further:

"That the Hendersons, Clyneses, MacDonalds and Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary is true. It is equally true that they want to take power into their own hands (though, incidentally, they prefer a coalition with the bourgeoisie), that they want to 'rule' on the old bourgeois lines, and that when they do get into power they will unfailingly behave like the Scheidemanns and Noskes. All that is true. But it by no means follows that to support them is treachery to the revolution, but rather that in the interests of the revolution the working-class revolutionaries should give these gentlemen a certain amount of parliamentary support" (ibid., pp. 218-19).

Hence, it follows from what Lenin says that political agreements, political blocs between the Communists and reactionary leaders of the working class are quite possible and permissible.

Let Trotsky and Zinoviev bear this in mind.

But why are such agreements necessary at all?

In order to gain access to the working-class masses, in order to enlighten them as to the reactionary

character of their political and trade-union leaders, in order to sever from the reactionary leaders the sections of the working class that are moving to the Left and becoming revolutionised, in order, consequently, to enhance the fighting ability of the working class as a whole.

Accordingly, such blocs may be formed only on two basic conditions, viz., that we are ensured freedom to criticise the reformist leaders, and that the necessary conditions for severing the masses from the reactionary leaders are ensured.

Here is what Lenin says on this score:

"The Communist Party should propose a 'compromise' to the Hendersons and Snowdens, an election agreement: let us together fight the alliance of Lloyd George and the Conservatives, let us divide the parliamentary seats in proportion to the number of votes cast by the workers for the Labour Party or for the Communists (not at the elections, but in a special vote), and let us retain complete liberty of agitation, propaganda and political activity. Without this last condition, of course, we cannot agree to a bloc, for it would be treachery; the British Communists must absolutely insist on and secure complete liberty to expose the Hendersons and the Snowdens in the same way as (for fifteen years, 1903-17) the Russian Bolsheviks insisted on and secured it in relation to the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens, i.e., the Mensheviks" (see Vol. XXV, p. 223).

And further:

"The petty-bourgeois democrats (including the Mensheviks) inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between bourgeois democracy and the Soviet system, between reformism and revolutionism between love for the workers and fear of the proletarian dictatorship, etc. The correct tactics for the Communists must be to utilise these vacillations, not to ignore them; and to utilise them calls for concessions to those elements which turn towards the proletariat -- whenever and to the extent that they turn towards the proletariat -- in addition to fighting those who turn towards the bourgeoisie. The result of the application of correct tactics is that Menshevism has disintegrated, and is increasingly disintegrating in our country, that the stubbornly opportunist leaders are being isolated, and that the best of the workers and the best elements among the petty-bourgeois democrats are being brought into our camp "

There you have the conditions without which no blocs or agreements with reactionary trade-union leaders are permissible.

Let the opposition bear that also in mind.

The question arises: Is the policy of our trade unions in conformity with the conditions Comrade Lenin speaks of?

I think that it is in full conformity. In the first place, we have completely reserved for ourselves full freedom to criticise the reformist leaders of the British working class and have availed ourselves of that freedom to a degree unequalled by any other Communist Party in the world. In the second place, we have gained access to the British working-class masses and strengthened our ties with them. And in the third place, we are effectively severing, and have already severed, whole sections of the British working class from the reactionary leaders. I have in mind the rupture of the miners with the leaders of the General Council.

Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev have studiously avoided saying anything here about the conference of Russian and British miners in Berlin and about their declaration<sup>9</sup>. Yet, surely, that is a highly important fact of the recent period. Richardson, Cook, Smith, Richards -- what are they?

Opportunists, reformists. Some of them are called Lefts, others Rights. All right! Which of them are more to the Left is something history will decide. It is very difficult for us to make this out just now -- the waters are dark and the clouds thick. But one thing is clear, and that is that we have severed these vacillating reformist leaders, who have the following of one million two hundred thousand striking miners, from the General Council and linked them with our trade unions. Is that not a fact? Why does the opposition say nothing about it?

Can it be that it does not rejoice at the success of our policy? And when Citrine now writes that the General Council and he are agreed to the Anglo-Russian Committee being convened, is that not a result of the fact that Schwartz and Akulov have succeeded in winning over Cook and Richardson, and that the General Council, being afraid of an open struggle with the miners, was therefore forced to agree to a meeting of the Anglo-Russian Committee? Who can deny that all these facts are evidence of the success of our policy, that all this is evidence of the utter bankruptcy of the policy of the opposition?

Hence, blocs with reactionary trade-union leaders are permissible. They are necessary, on certain conditions. Freedom of criticism is the first of them. Our Party is observing this condition. Severance of the working-class masses from the reactionary leaders is another condition. Our Party is observing this condition too. Our Party is right. The opposition is wrong.

The question arises: What more do Zinoviev and Trotsky want of us?

What they want is that our Soviet trade unions should either break with the Anglo-Russian Committee, or that they, acting from here, from Moscow, should overthrow the General Council. But that is stupid, comrades. To demand that we, acting from Moscow, and by-passing the British workers' trade unions, by-passing the British trade-union masses, by-passing the British trade-union officials, skipping over them, that we, acting from here, from Moscow, should overthrow the General Council -- is not that stupid, comrades?

They demand a demonstrative rupture. Is it difficult to understand that if we did that, the only result would be our own discomfiture? Is it difficult to understand that in the event of a rupture we lose contact with the British trade-union movement, we throw the British trade unions into the embraces of the Sassenbachs and Oudegeests, we shake the foundations of the united front tactics, and we delight the hearts of the Churchills and Thomases, without getting anything in return except discomfiture?

Trotsky takes as the starting point of his policy of theatrical gestures, not concrete human beings, not the concrete workers of flesh and blood who are living and struggling in Britain, but some sort of ideal and ethereal beings who are revolutionary from head to foot. Is it difficult, however, to understand that only persons devoid of common sense take ideal, ethereal beings as the starting point of their policy?

That is why we think that the policy of theatrical gestures, the policy of overthrowing the General Council from Moscow, by the efforts of Moscow alone, is a ridiculous and adventurist policy.

The policy of gestures has been the characteristic feature of Trotsky's whole policy ever since he joined our Party. We had a first application of this policy at the time of the Brest Peace, when Trotsky refused to sign the German-Russian peace agreement and countered it with a theatrical gesture, believing that a gesture was enough to rouse the proletarians of all countries against imperialism. That was a policy of gestures. And, comrades, you know very well how dear that gesture cost us. Into whose hands did that theatrical gesture play? Into the hands of the imperialists, the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and all who were then trying to strangle the Soviet

power, which at that time was not firmly established.

Now we are asked to adopt the same policy of theatrical gestures towards the Anglo-Russian Committee. They demand a demonstrative and theatrical rupture. But who would benefit from that theatrical gesture? Churchill and Chamberlain Sassenbach and Oudegeest. That is what they want. That is what they are waiting for. They, the Sassenbachs and Oudegeests, want us to make a demonstrative break with the British labour movement and thus render things easier for Amsterdam. They, the Churchills and Chamberlains, want the break in order to make it easier for them to launch intervention to provide them with a moral argument in favour of the interventionists.

These are the people into whose hands our oppositionists are playing.

No, comrades, we cannot adopt this adventurist course.

But such is the fate of "ultra-Left" phrasemongers. Their phrases are Leftist, but in practice it turns out that they are aiding the enemies of the working class. You go in on the Left and come out on the Right.

No, comrades, we shall not adopt this policy of theatrical gestures -- we shall no more adopt it today than we did at the time of the Brest Peace. We shall not adopt it because we do not want our Party to become a plaything in the hands of our enemies.

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## Notes

1. The Anglo-Russian Unity Committee was set up on the initiative of the A.U.C.C.T.U. at an Anglo-Soviet trade-union conference in London, April 6-8, 1925. It consisted of the chairmen and secretaries of the A.U.C.C.T.U. and the T.U.C. General Council and another three members from each of these organisations. The committee ceased to exist in the autumn of 1927 owing to the treacherous policy of the reactionary leaders of the British trade unions.
2. The joint plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission, C.P.S.U.(B.) was held July 14-23, 1926. It discussed a communication of the Political Bureau on its decisions in connection with the British general strike and the events in Poland and China, and reports on the results of the elections to the Soviets, on the case of Lashevich and others, and on Party unity, housing development, and the grain procurement campaign. At the plenum J. V. Stalin spoke on the Political Bureau's communication concerning the decisions taken by it in connection with the events in Britain, Poland and China, on the report of the Presidium of the C.C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) on the case of Lashevich and others, on Party unity and on other questions. The plenum approved the activities of the Political Bureau of the C.C. and of the C.P.S.U.(B.) delegation in the E.C.C.I. on the international question, and adopted a number of decisions on important questions of state and economic affairs, inner-Party life and the conditions of the workers. The plenum expelled Zinoviev from the Political Bureau of the C.C. (For the resolutions of the plenum, see Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums, Part II, 1953, pp. 148-69.)
3. This refers to the Amsterdam Trade Union International, founded in July 1919 at an international congress in Amsterdam. It included the reformist trade unions of the majority of the West-European countries and the American Federation of Labour. The Amsterdam International pursued a reformist policy, openly collaborated with the bourgeoisie in the International Labour Office and various commissions of the League of Nations, opposed a united front in the labour movement, and adopted



a hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union, as a result of which its influence in the labour movement gradually declined. During the Second World War the Amsterdam International practically ceased to function, and, in December 1945, in connection with the foundation of the World Federation of Trade Unions, it was liquidated.

4. Sassenbach and Oudegeest were secretaries of the reformist Amsterdam Trade Union International and leaders of its Right wing.

5. See V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 24, p. 123.

6. See V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 24, p. 216.

7. The “Workers’ Opposition”—an anti-Party anarcho-syndicalist group in the R.C.P.(B.), headed by Shlyapnikov, Medvedyev and others. It was formed in the latter half of 1920 and fought the Leninist line of the Party. The Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) condemned the “Workers’ Opposition” and decided that propaganda of the ideas of the anarcho-syndicalist deviation was incompatible with membership of the Communist Party. The remnants of the defeated “Workers’ Opposition” subsequently joined the counter-revolutionary Trotskyists.

8. Sotsialistichesky Vestnik (Socialist Courier)—a magazine, organ of the Menshevik whiteguard émigrés, founded by Martov in February 1921. Until March 1933 it was published in Berlin, and from May of that year until June 1940 in Paris. It is now published in America and is the mouthpiece of the most reactionary imperialist circles.

9. The conference of representatives of the Miners’ Federation of Great Britain and the Miners’ Union of the U.S.S.R. was held in Berlin on July 7, 1926. It discussed continuation of the campaign in aid of the locked-out British miners. It adopted a declaration “To the Workers of the World,” appealing for energetic support of the British miners and it expressed the need for an early meeting of the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee. The conference decided on the expediency of setting up an Anglo-Soviet Miners’ Committee for maintaining mutual contact and for achieving united revolutionary action of the Miners’ Union of the U.S.S.R. and the International Miners’ Federation.

Works of Stalin 1926



The Anglo-Russian Unity Committee

Speech Delivered at a Meeting of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. August 7, 1926;  
J. V. Stalin, Works Vol. 8;

Comrades, even before Murphy's speech, the C.C., C.P.S.U. (B.) had received a letter from the Central Committee of the British Communist Party protesting against the declaration of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions<sup>1</sup> on the general strike in Britain. It seems to me that Murphy is repeating here the arguments of that letter. He put forward here chiefly formal considerations, one of them being that the disputed issues had not been the subject of joint discussion with the British Communist Party beforehand. I admit that this last point of Murphy's has some justification. The Comintern has indeed at times had to take decisions without preliminary agreement with the Central Committee of the British Communist Party. But there were extenuating circumstances: the urgency of some of the questions, the impossibility of getting in touch speedily with the C.C. of the British Communist Party, etc.

As to Murphy's other considerations and arguments relating to the A.U.C.C.T.U. and its declaration, it must be said that they are quite incorrect.

It is incorrect to assert that the A.U.C.C.T.U. committed a formal error in issuing the declaration, on the grounds that in doing so it was taking upon itself what was allegedly a function of the Profintern or the Comintern. The A.U.C.C.T.U. has as much right to issue a declaration of its own as any trade-union or other association. How can the A.U.C.C.T.U. be denied this elementary right?

Still more incorrect is the assertion that by its declaration the A.U.C.C.T.U. infringed the rights of the Profintern or the Comintern, that the Profintern and the Comintern are injured parties whose interests suffered damage. I must inform you that the A.U.C.C.T.U. issued its declaration with the knowledge and approval of the Profintern and the Comintern. That, indeed, explains why neither the Profintern nor the Comintern has any idea of accusing the A.U.C.C.T.U. of having infringed its rights. Therefore, when Murphy attacks the A.U.C.C.T.U. on this point, he is as a matter of fact attacking the E.C.C.I. and the Profintern.

Lastly, it must be regarded as absolutely impermissible on Murphy's part to assert as he did that the A.U.C.C.T.U.'s criticism of the General Council, and its declaration generally, constitute "interference" in the internal affairs of the British Communist Party; that the A.U.C.C.T.U., being a "national organisation," has no warrant for such "interference." It is most deplorable to hear Murphy repeating the "arguments" put forward by Pugh and Purcell at the Paris meeting of the Anglo-Russian Committee. These are precisely the "arguments" that Pugh, Purcell and Citrine advanced the other day against the A.U.C.C.T.U. delegation. That alone is an indication that Murphy is in the wrong. The substance, the essence of the matter must not be disregarded because of formal considerations. A Communist cannot behave in that way. The affairs of the British miners would be in much better shape and the incorrect actions of the General Council would have been exposed if, side by side with the A.U.C.C.T.U., the "national" trade union federations of other countries, those of France, Germany, etc., say, had also come forward with a criticism of the General Council. It is not as an error on the part of the A.U.C.C.T.U., but rather as a service to the British workers that the publication of its declaration criticising the General Council should be regarded.

That is all I wanted to say in connection with Murphy's report, taking into account mainly the formal aspect of the matter.

I might have confined myself to that, in so far as the issue concerns the formal aspect of the matter. But the fact is that Murphy did not confine himself to the formal aspect of the matter. He needed this formal aspect in order to secure certain substantial results of a non-formal character. Murphy's tactics consist in using formal grounds as a camouflage, and taking advantage of certain formal shortcomings in the activities of the E.C.C.I., in order to secure definite decisions here on matters of substance. It is therefore necessary to say a few words about the substance of Murphy's arguments.

What is Murphy really out for?

To put it crudely, what he is out for is to compel the A.U.C.C.T.U. to stop criticising the General Council publicly, to compel the A.U.C.C.T.U. to keep silent and "not to interfere" in the "affairs of the General Council."

Can the A.U.C.C.T.U., or our Party, or the Comintern agree to that?

No, it cannot. For what would compelling the A.U.C.C.T.U. to keep silent mean, how would its silence be understood, at a time when the General Council is working to isolate the British miners now on strike and is paving the way for their defeat? To keep silent under such circumstances would mean keeping silent about the sins of the General Council, keeping silent about its treachery. And to keep silent about the General Council's treachery, when it and the A.U.C.C.T.U. have joined in a bloc in the shape of the Anglo-Russian Committee, would be tacitly to approve its treachery, and, consequently, to share with the General Council the responsibility for the latter's treachery in the eyes of the labour movement of the whole world. Does it need further proof that the A.U.C.C.T.U. would be committing political and moral suicide if it were to take this course, if it were even for a moment to renounce public criticism of the General Council's treachery?

Judge for yourselves. In May, the General Council called off the general strike, betraying the British working class in general, and the British miners in particular. Throughout June and July, the General Council did not lift a finger to help the striking miners. More, it did everything in its power to pave the way for the miners' defeat, and thus punish the "recalcitrant" British Miners' Federation. In August, at the Paris meeting of the Anglo-Russian Committee, the General Council leaders refused to discuss the proposal of the A.U.C.C.T.U. representatives on assistance to the British miners, despite the fact that the General Council had raised no objection to the agenda proposed for the meeting by the A.U.C.C.T.U. We thus have a whole chain of betrayals on the part of the General Council, which has got involved in rotten diplomacy. But Murphy demands that the A.U.C.C.T.U. should close its eyes to all these outrages and put a seal on its lips! No, comrades, the A.U.C.C.T.U. cannot adopt this course, for it does not want to commit suicide.

Murphy thinks that it would have been more fitting if the declaration against the General Council had been issued by the Profintern, as an international organisation, and if the A.U.C.C.T.U., as a "national" organisation, had passed a brief resolution associating itself with the Profintern's declaration. Looked at from the purely formal angle, there is a certain architectural harmony of a departmental kind in Murphy's plan. Looked at from that angle, it has a certain justification. But looked at from the political angle, Murphy's plan will not stand criticism. There is no need to prove that it would not have had one-hundredth part of the political effect that the A.U.C.C.T.U.'s declaration has undoubtedly had, in the sense of exposing the General Council and politically educating the masses of the British workers. The point is that the Profintern is less known to the British working class than is the A.U.C.C.T.U., it is less popular than the latter, and, consequently, carries far less weight. But it follows from this that the criticism of the General Council should have come precisely from the A.U.C.C.T.U., as the body enjoying greater prestige in the eyes of the British working class. No other course was possible, for it was necessary to hit the mark in exposing the treachery of the General Council. Judging by the howl raised by the reformist leaders of the British labour movement over the A.U.C.C.T.U.'s declaration, it may be said with confidence that the A.U.C.C.T.U. did hit the mark.

Murphy thinks that public criticism of the General Council by the A.U.C.C.T.U. may result in a rupture of the bloc with the General Council, in the break-up of the Anglo-Russian Committee. I think Murphy is mistaken. In view of the very active assistance the A.U.C.C.T.U.'s rendering the

miners, a break-up of the Anglo-Russian Committee may be considered out of the question, or almost out of the question. This, in fact, explains why nobody fears a break-up of the Anglo-Russian Committee more than the representatives of the General Council majority, Purcell and Hicks. Both Purcell and Hicks, of course, will try to blackmail us with the danger of a rupture. But you must be capable of distinguishing between blackmail and the real danger of a rupture.

Besides, it should be borne in mind that for us the Anglo-Russian Committee is not an end in itself. We did not join, and shall not remain, in the Anglo-Russian Committee unconditionally; we joined it on definite conditions, included among them being the right of the A.U.C.C.T.U. freely to criticise the General Council, equally with the right of the General Council freely to criticise the A.U.C.C.T.U. We cannot renounce freedom of criticism for the sake of respectability and maintaining the bloc at all costs.

What is the underlying purpose of the bloc? It is to organise joint action of the members of the bloc against capital in the interests of the working class, and joint action of the members of the bloc against imperialist war and for peace among the peoples. But what if one of the parties to the bloc, or certain leaders of one of the parties, violate and betray the interests of the working class, and thus render joint action impossible? Surely, we are not expected to praise them for such errors? Consequently, what is necessary is mutual criticism, the elimination of errors by means of criticism, so as to restore the possibility of joint action in the interests of the working class. Hence, the Anglo-Russian Committee has meaning only if freedom of criticism is guaranteed.

It is said that criticism may result in discrediting certain reactionary trade-union leaders. Well, what of it? I see nothing bad in that. The working class stands only to gain by the old leaders who are betraying its interests being discredited and replaced by new leaders loyal to the cause of the working class. And the sooner such reactionary and unreliable leaders are removed from their posts and replaced by new and better leaders who are free from the reactionary ways of the old leaders, the better it will be.

This, however, does not mean that the power of the reactionary leaders can be broken at one stroke, that they can be isolated and replaced by new, revolutionary leaders at short notice.

Certain pseudo-Marxists think that one "revolutionary" gesture, one vociferous attack, is enough to break the power of reactionary leaders. Real Marxists do not, and cannot, have anything in common with such people.

Others think that it is enough for Communists to work out a correct line, and the broad masses of the workers will instantaneously turn away from the reactionaries and reformists and instantaneously rally around the Communist Party. That is quite wrong. Only non-Marxists can think that. In point of fact, a correct Party line and the understanding and acceptance of that line as correct by the masses are two things that are very far apart. For the Party to win the following of vast masses, a correct line is not enough; for that it is necessary, in addition, that the masses should become convinced through their own experience of the correctness of the line, that the masses should accept the Party's policy and slogans as their own policy and slogans, and that they should begin to put them into effect. Only on this condition can a party with a correct policy really become the guiding force of the class.

Was the policy of the British Communist Party correct during the general strike in Britain? Yes, it was. Why, then, did it not win the following of the millions of workers on strike? Because those masses were not yet convinced of the correctness of the Communist Party's policy. And it is not possible to convince the masses of the correctness of the Party's policy in a short time. Still less is it possible with the help of "revolutionary" gestures. It requires time and unremitting energetic work

in exposing the reactionary leaders, in politically educating the backward masses of the working class, in promoting new cadres from the working class to leading posts.

From this it is easy to understand why the power of the reactionary leaders of the working class cannot be destroyed all at once, why this requires time and unremitting work in educating the vast masses of the working class.

But still less does it follow from this that the work of exposing the reactionary leaders must be dragged out over decades, or that the exposure can come of itself, of its own accord, without causing any offence to the reactionary leaders and without violating the "sacred rules" of respectability. No, comrades, nothing ever comes "of itself." The exposure of reactionary leaders and the political education of the masses must be done by you yourselves, the Communists, and by other political Left-wing leaders, through unremitting work for the political enlightenment of the masses. Only in that way can the work of revolutionising the broad masses of the workers be accelerated.

Lastly, one further remark in connection with Murphy's report. Murphy insistently harped on the specific features of the labour movement in Britain, on the role and significance of tradition in Britain, and, as it seems to me, he hinted that because of these specific features the ordinary Marxist methods of leadership may prove unsuitable in Britain. I think that Murphy is on a slippery path. Of course, the British labour movement has its specific features, and they must certainly be taken into account. But to elevate these specific features to a principle and make them the basis of activity is to adopt the standpoint of those people who proclaim that Marxism is inapplicable to British conditions. I do not think that Murphy has anything in common with such people. But I do want to say that he is near the fringe where the specifically British features begin to be elevated to a principle.

A word or two about Humboldt's speech. Humboldt, in raising an objection, says that criticism must not be empty and pointless. That is true. But what has that to do with the A.U.C.C.T.U. and the R.C.C.I., whose criticism is absolutely concrete? Was the criticism of the heroes of "Black Friday"<sup>2</sup> empty criticism? Of course not, because now, when "Black Friday" has already become a matter of history, this criticism is being repeated by all and sundry. Why, then, should the criticism of the treachery of the General Council leaders during the general strike and later, when the miners are continuing their strike, be called empty criticism? Where is the logic in that? Was the treachery at the time of the general strike less fatal than the treachery on "Black Friday"?

I am opposed to the method of criticism of individuals suggested by Humboldt if it is recommended as the basic method. I think that we should criticise reactionary leaders from the angle of their general line of leadership, and not of the individual peculiarities of the leaders themselves. I am not opposed to criticism of individuals as a subsidiary, auxiliary means. But I hold that the underlying basis of our criticism should be principles. Otherwise, instead of criticism from the standpoint of principle, we may just get squabbling and personal recrimination, which is bound to lower the level of our criticism to the detriment of our work.

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## Notes

1. The Declaration of the A.U.C.C.T.U.—the appeal "To the International Proletariat"—issued in connection with the betrayal of the British general strike by the reformist leaders of the Labour Party and of the T.U.C. General Council, was adopted by the Fourth Plenum of the A.U.C.C.T.U. on June 7, 1926. It was published in Pravda, No. 130, June 8, 1926.

2. The heroes of “Black Friday”—the reactionary British trade-union leaders—Thomas (railwaymen). Hodges (miners) and Williams (transport workers)—who called off the strike of railwaymen and transport workers in support of the striking miners which had been fixed for April 15, 1921, a day which, in consequence, came to be known among the British workers as “Black Friday.”

What is the trade-union united front policy, if not the uniting of the efforts of the workers not only of the advanced countries, but of all countries in general? Who can deny the prime role of our Party in promoting the trade-union united front policy throughout the world? Is it not a fact that our revolution has always supported, and continues to support, the development of the revolution in all countries?

J. V. Stalin:

(Reply to the Discussion on the Report on “The Social-Democratic Deviation in our Party” - November 3, 1926 – III - An Incredible Muddle, or Zinoviev on Revolutionary Spirit and Internationalism)

December 1926 - July 1927

[Volume 9](#)



To the Lena Workers

(February 22, 1927)



Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Workers of the Stalin Railway Workshops, October Railway  
(March 1, 1927)



Joint Plenum of the Central Committee  
and Central Control Commission of the  
C.P.S.U.(B.)

July 29 - August 9, 1927

### III

#### [The Anglo-Soviet Unity Committee](#)

About the Anglo-Soviet Committee. The opposition asserts that we banked, so to speak, on the Anglo-Soviet Committee. That is not true, comrades. It is one of those slanders that the bankrupt opposition so often resorts to. The whole world knows, and, therefore, the opposition should know too, that we do not bank on the Anglo-Soviet Committee, but on the world revolutionary movement and on our successes in building socialism. The opposition is deceiving the Party when it says that we banked, or are banking, on the Anglo-Soviet Committee.

What, then, is the Anglo-Soviet Committee? The Anglo-Soviet Committee is one of the forms of contact between our trade unions and the British trade unions, reformist trade unions, reactionary trade unions. At the present time we are carrying on our work for revolutionising the working class in Europe through three channels:

- a) through the channel of the Comintern, through the Communist sections, the immediate task of which is to eliminate reformist political leadership from the working-class movement;
- b) through the channel of the Profintern, through the revolutionary trade-union minorities, the immediate task of which is to defeat the reactionary labour aristocracy in the trade unions;
- c) through the Anglo-Soviet Unity Committee, as one of the means of helping the Profintern and its

sections in their struggle to isolate the labour aristocracy in the trade unions.

The first two channels are the main and permanent ones, essential for the Communists as long as classes and class society exist. The third is only a temporary, auxiliary, episodic channel and, therefore, not durable, not always reliable, and some times quite unreliable. To put the third channel on a par with the first two means running counter to the interests of the working class, to communism. That being the case, how can one talk about our having banked on the Anglo-Soviet Committee?

Our aim in agreeing to form the Anglo-Soviet Committee was to establish open contact with the masses of the organised workers of Britain.

For what purpose?

Firstly, for the purpose of helping to form a workers' united front against capital, or, at any rate, of hindering the efforts of the reactionary trade-union leaders to prevent the formation of such a front.

Secondly, for the purpose of helping to form a workers' united front against the danger of imperialist war in general and against the danger of intervention in particular, or, at any rate, of hindering the efforts of the reactionary trade-union leaders to prevent the formation of such a front.

Is it permissible at all for Communists to work in reactionary trade unions?

It is not only permissible, but sometimes it is positively essential to do so, for there are millions of workers in the reactionary trade unions, and Communists have no right to refuse to join those unions, to find a road to the masses and to win them over to communism.

Look at Lenin's book "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder and you will see that Lenin's tactics makes it obligatory for Communists not to refuse to work in reactionary trade unions.

Is it at all permissible to conclude temporary agreements with reactionary trade unions, agreements on trade-union matters, or on political matters?

It is not only permissible, but sometimes it is positively essential to do so. Everyone knows that the majority of the trade unions in the West are reactionary, but that is not the point at all. The point is that these unions are mass unions. The point is that through these trade unions it is possible to gain access to the masses. Care must be taken, however, that such agreements do not restrict, do not limit the freedom of Communists to conduct revolutionary agitation and propaganda, that such agreements help to disintegrate the ranks of the reformists and to revolutionise the masses of the workers who still follow the reactionary leaders. On these conditions, temporary agreements with mass reactionary trade unions are not only permissible but sometimes positively essential.

Here is what Lenin says on this score :

"Capitalism would not be capitalism if the 'pure' proletariat were not surrounded by a mass of exceedingly motley intermediate types between the proletarian and the semi-proletarian (who earns his livelihood in part by the sale of his labour power), between the semi-proletarian and the small peasant (and the petty artisan, handicraft worker and small proprietor in general), between the small peasant and the middle peasant, and so on, and if the proletariat itself were not divided into more developed and less developed strata, if it were not divided according to place of birth, trade, sometimes according to religion, and so on. And from all this follows the necessity, the absolute necessity, for the vanguard of the proletariat, for its class-conscious section, for the Communist



Party, to resort to manoeuvres, arrangements and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small proprietors.\* The whole point lies in knowing how to apply these tactics in order to raise, and not lower, the general level of proletarian political consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win" (Vol. XXV, p. 213).

And further:

"That the Hendersons, Clyneses, MacDonalds and Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary is true. It is equally true that they want to take power into their own hands (though, incidentally, they prefer a coalition with the bourgeoisie), that they want to 'rule' on the old bourgeois lines, and that when they do get into power they will unfailingly behave like the Scheidemanns and Noskes. All that is true. But it by no means follows that to support them is treachery to the revolution, but rather that in the interests of the revolution the working-class revolutionaries should give these gentlemen a certain amount of parliamentary support"\* (ibid., pp. 218-19).

The misfortune of the opposition is that it does not understand and does not accept these instructions of Lenin's, and instead of Lenin's policy prefers "ultra-Left" noisy talk about the trade unions being reactionary.

Does the Anglo-Soviet Committee restrict our agitation and propaganda, can it restrict it? No, it cannot. We have always criticised and will criticise the reactionary character of the leaders of the British labour movement, revealing to the masses of the British working class the perfidy and treachery of these leaders. Let the opposition try to refute the fact that we have always openly and ruthlessly criticised the reactionary activities of the General Council.

We are told that this criticism may cause the British to break up the Anglo-Soviet Committee. Well, let them do so. The point is not whether there will be a rupture or not, but on what question it will take place, what idea will be demonstrated by that rupture. At the present moment we are faced with the threat of war in general and of intervention in particular. If the British break away, the working class will know that the reactionary leaders of the British labour movement broke away because they did not want to counteract the organisation of war by their imperialist government. There can scarcely be any doubt that a rupture brought about by the British under such circumstances will help the Communists to discredit the General Council, for the question of war is the fundamental question of the present day.

It is possible that they will not venture to break away. But what will that mean? It will mean that we have established our freedom to criticise, our freedom to continue criticising the reactionary leaders of the British labour movement, to expose their treachery and social imperialism to the broad masses. Will that be good for the labour movement? I think it will not be bad.

Such, comrades, is our attitude towards the question of the Anglo-Soviet Committee.



Joint Plenum of the Central Committee  
and Central Control Commission of the  
C.P.S.U.(B.)

July 29 - August 9, 1927

The International Situation and the Defence of the U.S.S.R

Speech Delivered on August 1

IV

The Anglo-Soviet Unity Committee



Joseph Stalin's Interview With The First American Labor Delegation in Russia

Questions Put By The Delegation and Stalin's Replies

Pravda September 15, 1927

QUESTION II. Is it accurate to say that the Communist Party controls the Russian Government?

ONE OF THE DELEGATES: On the same principles the Party guides the trade unions?

STALIN: In the main, yes. Formally, the Party cannot give instructions to the trade unions, but the Party gives instructions to the Communists who work in the trade unions. It is known that in the trade unions there are Communist fractions as there are also in the Soviets, cooperative societies, etc. It is the duty of these Communist fractions to secure by argument the adoption of decisions in the trade unions, in the Soviets, cooperative societies, etc., which correspond to the Party's instructions. This they are able to achieve in the overwhelming majority of cases because the Party exercises enormous influence among the masses and enjoys their great confidence. By these means is secured unity of action of the most varied proletarian organizations. If this were not done there would be confusion and clashing in the work of these working class organizations.

QUESTION IX. American labor leaders justify their struggle against the Communists on two grounds: (1) The Communists are disrupting and destroying the labor movement by their factional fights inside the unions and their attacks on all union officials who are not radicals, and (2) American Communists take their orders from Moscow and hence cannot be good trade unionists

since their loyalty to an outside foreign body is placed above their loyalty to the union. How can this difficulty be adjusted so that American communists can work jointly with other sections of the American labor movement?

REPLY: I think that the attempts of the American labor leaders to justify their struggle against the Communists do not stand examination. No one has yet proved nor can it be proved that the Communists disrupt the labor movement. But it can be taken as fully proved that the Communists are the most loyal and boldest champions of the labor movement all over the world, including America. Is it not a fact that during strikes and demonstrations the Communist workingmen take their place in the front ranks of the working class and receive the first blows of the capitalists, whereas the reformist labor leaders take shelter in the backyards of the capitalists?

How can Communists refrain from criticizing the cowardice and the reactionary policies of the reformist labor leaders? Is it not clear that such criticism can serve only to stimulate and strengthen the labor movement? True, such criticism destroys the authority of the reactionary labor leaders, but what about that? Let the reactionary labor leaders answer the criticism, not expel the Communists from the unions. I think that if the labor movement in America desires to live on and develop, it cannot avoid a conflict of opinion and of tendencies within the trade unions. I think that the conflict of opinion and of tendencies within the trade unions, criticism of the reactionary labor leaders, etc., will continue to grow notwithstanding the efforts of the reformist labor leaders to prevent it. The working class of America stands in absolute need of such conflict of opinion and of such criticism in order that it may be able to choose between the various tendencies and finally to take up its stand as an independent organized force within American society. The complaints made by American reformist leaders against the Communists merely indicate that they are not sure of the correctness of their case and do not feel strong in their position. That is why they fight criticism like a plague. It is a remarkable fact that the American labor leaders are more determined opponents of elementary democracy than many capitalists in America.

The assertion that the American Communists work under "orders from Moscow" is absolutely untrue. There are no such Communists in the world who would agree to work "under orders" from outside against their own convictions and will and contrary to the requirements of the situation. Even if there were such Communists they would not be worth a cent. Communists bravely fight against a host of enemies. The value of a Communist, among other things, lies in that he is able to defend his convictions. Therefore, it is strange to speak of American Communists as not having their own convictions and capable only of working according to "orders" from outside. The only part of the labor leaders' assertion that has any truth in it at all is that the American Communists are affiliated to an international Communist organization and from time to time consult with the Central body of this organization on one question or another.

But what is there bad in this? Are the American labor leaders opposed to an international workers' center? It is true they are not affiliated to Amsterdam, not because they are opposed to an international workers' center as such however, but because they regard Amsterdam as being too radical (laughter). Why may the capitalists organize internationally and the working class, or part of it, not have its international organization? Is it not clear that Green and his friends in the American Federation of Labor slander the American Communists when they slavishly repeat the capitalist legends about "orders from Moscow?" Some people believe that the members of the Communist International in Moscow do nothing else but sit and write instructions to all countries. As there are more than 60 countries affiliated to the Comintern, one can imagine the position of the members of the Comintern who never sleep or eat, in fact do nothing but sit day and night and write instructions to all countries. (laughter). And the American labor leaders believe that with this ridiculous legend they can cover up their fear of the Communists and conceal the fact that Communists are the bravest and most loyal workers in the labor movement in America.

The delegation asks for a way out of this situation. I think there is only one way out: leave room for conflict of opinion and of tendencies within the American trade unions, give up the reactionary policy of expelling the Communists from the trade unions, and give the working class of America an opportunity of making a free choice of these tendencies; for America has not yet had its November Revolution and the workers there have not yet had the opportunity of making their final selection from among the various tendencies in the trade unions.

### Stalin's Questions to the Delegation and its Replies

STALIN: If the delegation is not too tired, I would ask it to permit me to put several questions. (Delegation agrees).

QUESTION I. How do you account for the small percentage of American workers organized in trade unions? I think there are about 17 million industrial workers in America (the delegates explain that there are from 18 to 19 million industrial workers). I think that about 3 millions are organized. (Delegates explain that the American Federation of Labor has a membership approximately of 3 million and that besides these about a half million workers are organized in other unions, so that taken together 3½ million workers are organized.) Personally I think that the proportion of American workers organized in trade unions is very small. In the U.S.S.R. 90% of all the proletarians in the country are organized in trade unions.

I would like to ask the delegation whether it regards this small percentage of organized workers as a good thing. Does not the delegation think that this small percentage is an indication of the weakness of the American proletariat and of the weakness of its weapon in the struggle against the capitalists in the economic field?

BROPHY: The small membership of trade unions is to be explained not by the bad tactics applied in the labor organizations but by the general economic conditions prevailing in the country, which do not stimulate the whole mass of the workers to organize. These favorable economic conditions restrict the necessity of the working class to fight against the capitalists. Of course, these conditions will change. And simultaneously with the change in these conditions, the trade unions will grow and the whole of the trade union movement will proceed along a different path.

DOUGLAS: I agree with the explanation given by the previous speaker. To that I add however, that first of all, it is necessary to bear in mind that wages in the United States have been recently increased considerably by the capitalists themselves. This process of rising wages was observed in 1917, 1919 and later. If we compare the real wages prevailing at the present time with the wages prevailing in 1911, we will find that they are considerably higher. In the process of its development the trade union movement at first based itself and still bases itself on the craft principle, according to trade, and the trade unions were formed mainly for skilled workers. At the head of these unions, there were definite leaders who represented a close organization and strove to obtain good conditions for their members. They had no stimuli to widen the labor organizations or to organize the unskilled workers. Moreover, the American trade unions come up against well-organized capitalism which has at its disposal all means to prevent the organization of all the workers in trade unions. If for example, a trust encounters the too strong resistance of the trade unions in one of its enterprises, it will close down that enterprise and transfer its work to another. In this way the resistance of the trade unions is broken. The American capitalists voluntarily raise the wages of the workers but give them no economic power or the possibility of fighting for the economic improvement of their conditions of life. Another very important fact in America is that the

capitalists sow dissension among the workers of various nationalities. In the majority of cases the unskilled workers are immigrants from Europe or as become the case recently, Negroes. Dissension is also sown between skilled workers and unskilled workers.

The capitalists systematically sow antagonism among the workers of various nationalities irrespective of their degree of skill. During the last ten years American capitalism has been conducting a more enlightened policy in that they are forming their own trade unions, the so-called company unions. They strive to develop the workers' interest in the enterprise and in the increase of profits. American capitalism shows a tendency to substitute horizontal division by vertical division, i. e., to split up the working class and to give it an interest in capitalism.

COYLE: I approach the question not from the theoretical point of view but from the practical point of view. It is true that it is easier to organize the workers in good times but the statistics of the membership of the American Federation of Labor show that the A. F. of L. is gradually losing the unskilled workers and is increasing its membership of skilled workers. Thus the American Federation of Labor desires to become and is gradually becoming an organization principally of the skilled workers. The trade union movement in America barely touches the unskilled workers. The big branches of industry are hardly touched by the trade unions. Of these big branches of industry only the mining and railroad industries are organized to any extent, and even in the coal industry 65 per cent of the workers are unorganized. The workers in such industries as steel, rubber, and automobiles are hardly organized at all. It may be said that the trade unions do not touch the unskilled workers. There are a number of trade unions outside the American Federation of Labor which strive to organize the unskilled and semiskilled workers. As for the position taken up by the leaders of the American Federation of Labor, for example, the President of the Machinists Union quite frankly stated that he does not wish to attract the unskilled workers to his union. The position in regard to the trade union leaders is this: that a leader caste has grown up consisting of a few score of individuals who receive enormous salaries up to \$10,000 per annum and even more, into which it is extremely difficult to penetrate.

DUNN: The question put by Stalin is not fair because if in this country 90 per cent of the workers are organized, it must be borne in mind that here power is in the hands of the working class, whereas in capitalist countries the workers are an oppressed class and the bourgeoisie does everything to prevent the workers from organizing. Moreover, there are reactionary trade unions led by reactionary leaders in those countries. In the conditions prevailing in America it is very difficult to get into the heads of the workers the very idea of trade unionism. This explains why trade unionism in America is not so widespread.

STALIN: Does the speaker agree with the previous speaker that certain leaders of the labor movement in America strive to restrict the trade union movement?

DUNN: I agree.

STALIN: I did not wish to offend anybody. I merely wanted to clear up for myself the difference in the situation that exists in America as compared with the U.S.S.R. If I have offended anybody I hope you will forgive me. (Laughter.)

STALIN: Is there a system of State insurance of workers in America?

A DELEGATE: There is no system of State insurance of workers in America.

COYLE: In the majority of states compensation is paid for accidents during employment and the maximum of 30 per cent of the loss of earning capacity is paid. This is in the majority of states. The

compensation is paid by the private firms in whose enterprises the accident occurred. But the law demands that compensation shall be paid.

STALIN: Is there State insurance against unemployment in America?

A DELEGATE: No. The funds for insurance against unemployment might satisfy from 80 to 100,000 unemployed in all states.

COYLE: There is insurance (not government insurance) against accidents during employment but there is no insurance against sickness or old age. The insurance fund is made up of contributions from the workers. As a matter of fact the fund is provided by the workers themselves, because if the workers did not organize these funds they would receive higher wages and as these funds are established in agreement with the employers the workers receive a smaller wage. As a matter of fact, the employers contribute only a very small, proportion of the fund, about 10 per cent. Almost the whole of it is made up by the workers.

STALIN: I think the comrades will be interested to learn that in the U.S.S.R. more than 800 million roubles per annum are appropriated for workers' insurance. It will not be superfluous to add also that our workers in all branches of industry, in addition to their ordinary money wages, receive a supplementary grant of about one-third of the wages paid for insurance, social improvements, cultural requirements.

QUESTION II. How do you explain the absence of a special mass workers' party in the United States? The bourgeoisie in America have two parties, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. But the American workers have no mass party of their own. Do not the comrades think that the absence of such a mass workers' party even if it were like the British Labor Party weakens the working class in its political fight against the capitalists? Then again, why do the leaders of the Labor movement in America, Green and the others, so strongly oppose the establishment of a Labor Party in America?

BROPHY: Yes, the leaders did decide that there was no necessity for forming such a Party. However, there is a minority which considers that such a Party is necessary.

Conditions in America at the present time are such, as has been pointed out already, that the trade union movement is extremely weak. The weakness of the trade union movement is to be explained in its turn by the fact that the working class at present does not have to fight against the capitalists because the capitalists themselves increase wages and guarantee to them satisfactory material conditions.

STALIN: But it is the skilled workers mainly whose material conditions are guaranteed. There is a contradiction here. On the one hand it would appear that there is no necessity for organization because the workers are provided for. On the other hand it is said that the more secure workers, the skilled workers, are organized in the trade unions. Thirdly, it would appear that the unorganized workers are those least provided for, namely, the unskilled workers who most of all stand in need of organization. I cannot understand this at all.

BROPHY: Yes. There is a contradiction. But So are American political and economic conditions contradictory.

BREBNER: Although the unskilled workers are not organized, they have the political right to vote, so that if there is any discontent the unskilled workers can express this discontent by exercising their political right to vote. On the other hand the organized workers who belong to trade unions,

when particularly bad times come, do not turn to their union but exercise their vote. Thus the political right to vote compensates for the lack of trade union organization.

ISRAELS: One of the principal difficulties is the very System of election in the United States. It is not the man for whom the majority of the votes of the whole country is cast, or even the majority of the votes of any particular class is cast, that is elected as President. In every state there is an electoral college; every state has a certain number of electors who participate in the election of the President. To be elected, the candidate must obtain 51 per cent of the votes. If there were 3 or 4 parties no one candidate would be elected and the election of the President would have to be transferred to the Congress. This is an argument against forming a third Party.

The opponents of the third party argue in this way: Don't put forward a third candidate because you will split the liberal vote and you will prevent the liberal candidate from being elected.

STALIN: But Senator LaFollette in his time was creating a third bourgeois party. It follows then that the third party will not split votes if it is a bourgeois party, but it may split votes if it is a labor party.

DAVIS: I do not regard the fact mentioned by the previous speaker as a fundamental one. I think the most important point is the following. I will quote the example of the city in which I live. During the election campaign the representative of a certain party gives the trade union leader an important job in connection with the campaign and places certain funds at his disposal, which he uses for his own purpose. In this way he obtains a high prestige connected with his job. It turns out, therefore, that the leaders of the trade union support one or the other of the bourgeois parties. Naturally, when there is any talk of forming a third party, a labor party, these labor leaders refuse to do anything in the matter. They argue that if a third party were formed there would be a split in the trade union movement.

DOUGLAS: The fact that only skilled workers are organized in trade unions is due principally to the fact that in order to be able to form a union a man must have money and be well off, because the entrance fees are high and the unskilled worker cannot afford to pay. Moreover, the unskilled workers are under the constant danger of being thrown out of work if he attempts to organize. The unskilled workers can be organized only with the active aid of the skilled workers.

In the majority of cases this aid is not forthcoming and this is one of the principal obstacles to the organization of the unskilled workers. The principal means by which the workers can defend their rights are political means. This in my opinion is the principal reason why the unskilled workers are unorganized. I consider the economic condition the principal factor in the unorganized state of the unskilled workers in the political and industrial fields. I must point to a special feature of the American electoral system. The direct primary election, in which any man may get to the election booth, declare himself a democrat or a republican and cast his vote. I am convinced that Gompers could not keep the workers on a non-partisan political program if he did not have the argument of the direct primary. He always told the workers that if they wished to act politically, they could join either of the existing two political parties, get the responsible positions in them and command influence. With this argument Gompers managed to keep the workers away from the idea of organizing the working class and of forming a Labor Party.



Speech Delivered at the Eighth Congress of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League

May 16, 1928

## II

### Organise Mass Criticism from Below

And the trade unions? Who will deny that in the trade unions there is bureaucracy in plenty? We have production conferences in the factories. We have temporary control commissions in the trade unions. It is the task of these organisations to rouse the masses, to bring our shortcomings to light and to indicate ways and means of improving our constructive work. Why are these organisations not developing? Why are they not seething with activity? Is it not obvious that it is bureaucracy in the trade unions, coupled with bureaucracy in the Party organisations, that is preventing these highly important organisations of the working class from developing?



### [The Right Danger in the German Communist Party](#)

Speech: Delivered at a Meeting of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I., December 19, 1928 Bolshevik,  
No. 23-24, 1928;

Source: J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 11, pp. 307-24

## II. THE PROBLEM OF THE CLASS BATTLES OF THE PROLETARIAT

Just as erroneous is Humbert-Droz's opinion of the class battles of the proletariat in the capitalist countries, of their character and significance. It follows from Humbert-Droz's speech at the meeting of the Political Secretariat that the struggle of the working class, its spontaneous clashes with the capitalists, are in the main only of a defensive character, and that the leadership of this struggle on the part of the Communist Parties should be carried out only within the framework of the existing reformist trade unions.



Is that right? No, it is wrong. To assert that means to drag in the wake of events. Humbert-Droz forgets that the struggle of the working class is now taking place on the basis of a stabilisation that is becoming shaken, that the battles of the working class not infrequently bear the character of counter-battles, of a counter-offensive and a direct offensive against the capitalists. Humbert-Droz fails to see anything new in the battles of the working class in the recent period. He fails to see such things as the Lodz general strike, the economic strikes for better conditions of labour in France, Czechoslovakia and Germany, the mighty mobilisation of the proletarian forces in Germany in the fights against the lock-out of the metalworkers, and so on and so forth.

What do these and similar facts show, what do they indicate? That deep within the capitalist countries the pre-conditions for a new revolutionary upsurge of the working-class movement are ripening. And that is the new element which Humbert-Droz and Serra fail to see, fail to observe, and which never will be observed at all by comrades who have become accustomed to looking backward instead of forward.

And what does looking backward instead of forward mean? It means dragging in the wake of events, failing to see what is new in developments, and being caught by surprise. It means renouncing the leading role of the Communist Parties in the working-class movement. That was precisely what caused the German Communist Party leadership to come to grief in the 1923 revolution. Consequently, he who does not want to repeat the mistakes of 1923 must rouse the minds of the Communists and urge them onward, must prepare the masses for the coming battles, must take every measure to ensure that the Communist Parties are not left behind in the wake of events and that the working class is not caught by surprise.

It is extremely strange that Humbert-Droz and Serra forget these things.

At the time of the Ruhr battles the German Communists noted the fact that the unorganised workers proved to be more revolutionary than the organised workers. Humbert-Droz is outraged by this and declares that it could not have been so. Strange! Why could it not have been so? There are about a million workers in the Ruhr. Of them, about two hundred thousand are organised in trade unions. The trade unions are directed by reformist bureaucrats who are connected in all manner of ways with the capitalist class. Why is it surprising, then, that the unorganised workers proved to be more revolutionary than the organised? Could it indeed have been otherwise?

I might tell you of even more "surprising" facts from the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia. With us, it happened not infrequently that the masses proved to be more revolutionary than (some of) their communist leaders. That is well known to all the Russian Bolsheviks. It was this that Lenin had in mind when he said that we must not only teach the masses, but also learn from the masses. What is surprising is not these facts, but that Humbert-Droz does not understand such simple things taken from the sphere of practical revolutionary experience.

The same must be said of Serra. He does not approve of the fact that the German Communists, in their struggle to organise the locked-out metalworkers, went beyond the framework of the existing trade unions and shook this framework. He regards this as an infringement of the resolutions of the Fourth Congress of the Profintern. He claims that the Profintern called upon Communists to work only within the trade unions. That is nonsense, comrades! The Profintern did not call for anything of the kind. To say that is to condemn the Communist Party to the role of a passive observer of the class battles of the proletariat. To say that is to bury the idea of the leading role of the Communist Party in the working-class movement.

The merit of the German Communists is precisely that they did not allow themselves to be scared by talk about "the framework of the trade unions" and went beyond this framework by organising

the struggle of the non-organised workers against the will of the trade union bureaucrats. The merit of the German Communists is precisely that they sought for and found new forms of struggle and organisation of the unorganised workers. It is possible that in doing so they committed a number of trifling errors. But no new undertaking is ever free from errors. From the fact that we must work within the reformist trade unions — provided only that they are mass organisations — it does not at all follow that we must confine our mass work to work within the reformist trade unions, that we must become slaves of the standards and demands of those unions. If the reformist leadership is identifying itself with capitalism (see the resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and the Fourth Congress of the Profintern), while the working class is waging a struggle against capitalism, can it be affirmed that the struggle of the working class, led by the Communist Party, can avoid breaking to some extent the existing reformist framework of the trade unions? Obviously, this cannot be affirmed without landing into opportunism. Therefore, a situation is quite conceivable in which it may be necessary to create parallel mass associations of the working class, against the will of the trade-union bosses who have sold themselves to the capitalists. We already have such a situation in America. It is quite possible that things are moving in the same direction in Germany too.



## THE RIGHT DANGER IN THE GERMAN COMMUNIST PARTY

Speech Delivered  
at a Meeting of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I.  
December 19, 1928

### II

## THE PROBLEM OF THE CLASS BATTLES OF THE PROLETARIAT



## EMULATION AND LABOUR ENTHUSIASM OF THE MASSES

Forward to E. Mikulina's Pamphlet  
"Emulation of the Masses"

May 11, 1929  
Pravda, No. 114,  
May 22, 1929  
Signed: J. Stalin

It is hardly open to doubt that one of the most important features—if not the most important—of our constructive work at the present moment is the wide development of emulation among the vast masses of the workers. Emulation between whole mills and factories in the most diverse corners of our boundless country; emulation between workers and peasants; emulation between collective farms and state farms; registration of these mass-scale production challenges in specific agreements of the working people—all these are facts which leave no doubt whatever that socialist emulation among the masses has already become a reality.

A mighty upsurge of production enthusiasm among the masses of the working people has begun. Now even the most confirmed sceptics are forced to admit this.

"Far from extinguishing emulation," Lenin says, "socialism for the first time creates the opportunity for employing it on a really wide and on a really mass scale, for really drawing the majority of the working people into the arena of such work as enables them to display their abilities, develop their capacities, reveal their talents, of which there is an untapped spring among the people, and which capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled among thousands and millions." . . .

. . . "Only now is the opportunity created on a wide scale for a truly mass display of enterprise, emulation and bold initiative" . . . because "for the first time after centuries of working for others, of working under compulsion for the exploiters, it has become possible to work for oneself." . . .

. . . "Now that a socialist Government is in power, our task is to organise emulation."

It was from these propositions of Lenin that the Sixteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) proceeded when it issued the special appeal for emulation to the workers and all labouring people.

Certain "comrades" of the bureaucratic type think that emulation is just the latest Bolshevik fashion, and that, as such, it is bound to die out when the "season" passes. These bureaucratic "comrades" are, of course, mistaken. In point of fact, emulation is the communist method of building socialism, on the basis of the maximum activity of the vast masses of the working people. In point of fact, emulation is the lever with which the working class is destined to transform the entire economic and cultural life of the country on the basis of socialism.

Other "comrades" of the bureaucratic type, frightened by the powerful tide of emulation, are trying to compress it within artificial bounds and canalise it, to "centralise" the emulation movement, to narrow its scope and thus deprive it of its most important feature—the initiative of the masses. It goes without saying that the hopes of the bureaucrats will not be realised. At any rate, the Party will make every effort to shatter them.

Socialist emulation must not be regarded as a bureaucratic undertaking. Socialist emulation is a manifestation of practical revolutionary self-criticism by the masses, springing from the creative initiative of the vast masses of the working people. All who, wittingly or unwittingly, restrict this self-criticism and creative initiative of the masses must be brushed aside as an impediment to our great cause.

The bureaucratic danger manifests itself concretely above all in the fact that it shackles the energy, initiative and independent activity of the masses, keeps concealed the colossal reserves latent in the depths of our system, deep down in the working class and peasantry, and prevents these reserves from being utilised in the struggle against our class enemies. It is the task of socialist emulation to smash these bureaucratic shackles, to afford broad scope for the unfolding of the energy and

creative initiative of the masses, to bring to light the colossal reserves latent in the depths of our system, and to throw them into the scale in the struggle against our class enemies both inside and outside our country.

Socialist emulation is sometimes confused with competition. That is a great mistake. Socialist emulation and competition exhibit two entirely different principles.

The principle of competition is: defeat and death for some and victory and domination for others.

The principle of socialist emulation is: comradely assistance by the foremost to the laggards, so as to achieve an advance of all.

Competition says: Destroy the laggards so as to establish your own domination. Socialist emulation says: Some work badly, others I work well, yet others best of all—catch up with the best and secure the advance of all.

That, in fact, explains the unprecedented production enthusiasm which has gripped the vast masses of the working people as a result of socialist emulation. It goes without saying that competition can never call forth anything resembling this enthusiasm of the masses.

Of late, articles and comments on emulation have been more frequent in our press. They discuss the philosophy of emulation, the roots of emulation, the possible results of emulation and so on. But one rarely finds an article which gives any coherent description of how emulation is put into effect by the masses themselves, what the vast masses of the workers experience when practising emulation and signing agreements, a description showing that the masses of the workers regard emulation as their own cause, near and dear to them. Yet this side of emulation is of the highest importance for us.

I think that Comrade E. Mikulina's pamphlet is the first attempt to give a coherent exposition of data from the practice of emulation, showing it as an undertaking of the masses of the working people themselves. The merit of this pamphlet is that it gives a simple and truthful account of those deep-lying processes of the great upsurge of labour enthusiasm that constitute the inner driving force of socialist emulation.

May 11, 1929

Pravda, No. 114,

May 22, 1929

Signed: J. Stalin



## Political Report of the Central Committee to the Sixteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.)

June 27, 1930

### 7. Difficulties of Growth, the Class Struggle and the Offensive of Socialism Along the Whole Front

#### c) What is the essence of the Bolshevik offensive under our present conditions?

The essence of the Bolshevik offensive lies, secondly, in organising the reconstruction of the entire

practical work of the trade-union, co-operative, Soviet and all other mass organisations to fit the requirements of the reconstruction period; in creating in them a core of the most active and revolutionary functionaries, pushing aside and isolating the opportunist, trade-unionist, bureaucratic elements; in expelling from them the alien and degenerate elements and promoting new cadres from the rank and file.



## Political Report of the Central Committee to the Sixteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.)

June 27, 1930

The Growing Crisis of World Capitalism and the External Situation of the USSR

### 2. THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALISM

d) the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat



## OUR NEW TASKS SPEECH CONFERENCE OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE SOVIET INDUSTRY

February, 1931

A bolshevik's word is a serious word. The bolsheviks are accustomed to fulfill their , promises.

What else is needed?

That this government should enjoy the support of the vast masses of workers and peasants. Does our government enjoy such support? Yes, it does. You will find no other government in the world that enjoys such support from the workers and peasants as does the Soviet government. There is no

need for me to refer to the growth of socialist emulation, the spread of shock-brigade work, the campaign and struggle for counter-plans. All these facts, which vividly demonstrate the support that the vast masses give the Soviet Government, are well known.

What else is needed in order to fulfil and overfulfil the control figures for 1931?

A system that is free from the incurable diseases of capitalism and has great advantages over capitalism.

Crises, unemployment, waste, destitution among the masses—such are the incurable diseases of capitalism.

Our system does not suffer from these diseases because power is in our hands, in the hands of the working class; because we are conducting a planned economy, systematically accumulating resources and properly distributing them among the different branches of the national economy. We are free from the incurable diseases of capitalism. That is what distinguishes us from capitalism; that is what constitutes our decisive superiority over capitalism.

Notice the way in which the capitalists are trying to escape from the economic crisis. They are reducing the workers' wages as much as possible. They are reducing the prices of raw materials as much as possible.

But they do not want to reduce the prices of food and industrial commodities for mass consumption to any important extent. This means that they want to escape from the crisis at the expense of the principal consumers, at the expense of the workers and peasants, at the expense of the working people. The capitalists are cutting the ground from under their own feet. And instead of overcoming the crisis they are aggravating it; new conditions are accumulating which lead to a new, even more severe crisis.

Our superiority lies in the fact that we have no crises of overproduction, we have not and never will have millions of unemployed, we have no anarchy in production, for we are conducting a planned economy. But that is not all. We are a land of the most concentrated industry. This means that we can build our industry on the basis of the best technique and thereby secure an unprecedented productivity of labour, an unprecedented rate of accumulation. Our weakness in the past was that this industry was based upon scattered and small peasant farming. That was so in the past; it is no longer so now. Soon, perhaps within a year, we shall become the country of the largest-scale agriculture in the world.

This year, the state farms and collective farms—and these are forms of large-scale farming—have already supplied half of all our marketable grain. And that means that our system, the Soviet system, affords us opportunities of rapid progress of which not a single bourgeois country can dream.

What else is needed in order to advance with giant strides?

A party sufficiently solid and united to direct the efforts of all the best members of the working class to one point, and sufficiently experienced to be unafraid of difficulties and to pursue systematically a correct, revolutionary, Bolshevik policy. Have we such a party?

Yes, we have. Is its policy correct? Yes, it is, for it is yielding important successes. This is now admitted not only by the friends but also by the enemies of the working class. See how all the well-known “honourable” gentlemen, Fish in America, Churchill in Britain, Poincaré in France, fume and rave against our Party. Why do they fume and rave? Because the policy of our Party is correct, because it is yielding success after success.

Is everything in order in this respect?

Unfortunately, not everything is in order here. And, as Bolsheviks, we must say this plainly and frankly.

What does management of production mean? There are people among us who do not always have a Bolshevik approach to the question of the management of our factories. There are many people among us who think that management is synonymous with signing papers and orders. This is sad,

but true. At times one cannot help recalling Shchedrin's Pompadours. Do you remember how Madame Pompadour taught the young Pompadour:

"Don't bother your head with science, don't go into matters, let others do that, it is not your business—your business is to sign papers." It must be admitted to our shame that even among us Bolsheviks there are not a few who carry out management by signing papers. But as for going into matters, mastering technique, becoming master of the business—why, that is out of the question. How is it that we Bolsheviks, who have made three revolutions, who emerged victorious from the bitter civil war, who have solved the tremendous task of building a modern industry, who have swung the peasantry on to the path of socialism—how is it that in the matter of the management of production we bow to a slip of paper?

The reason is that it is easier to sign papers than to manage production. And so, many economic executives are taking this line of least resistance. We, too, in the centre, are also to blame. About ten years ago a slogan was issued: "Since Communists do not yet properly understand the technique of production, since they have yet to learn the art of management, let the old technicians and engineers—the experts—carry on production, and you, Communists, do not interfere with the technique of the business; but, while not interfering, study technique, study the art of management tirelessly, in order later on, together with the experts who are loyal to us, to become true managers of production, true masters of the business." Such was the slogan. But what actually happened? The second part of this formula was cast aside, for it is harder to study than to sign papers; and the first part of the formula was vulgarised: non-interference was interpreted to mean refraining from studying the technique of production. The result has been nonsense, harmful and dangerous nonsense, which the sooner we discard the better.

Life itself has more than once warned us that all was not well in this field. The Shakhty affair<sup>15</sup> was the first grave warning. The Shakhty affair showed that the Party organisations and the trade unions lacked revolutionary vigilance. It showed that our economic executives were disgracefully backward in technical knowledge; that some of the old engineers and technicians, working without supervision, rather easily go over to wrecking activities, especially as they are constantly being besieged by "offers" from our enemies abroad.

The second warning was the "Industrial Party" trial.

Of course, the underlying cause of wrecking activities is the class struggle. Of course, the class enemy furiously resists the socialist offensive. This alone, however, is not an adequate explanation for the luxuriant growth of wrecking activities.

How is it that wrecking activities assumed such wide dimensions? Who is to blame for this? We are to blame.

Had we handled the business of managing production differently, had we started much earlier to learn the technique of the business, to master technique, had we more frequently and efficiently intervened in the management of production, the wreckers would not have succeeded in doing so much damage.

We must ourselves become experts, masters of the business; we must turn to technical science—such was the lesson life itself was teaching us. But neither the first warning nor even the second brought about the necessary change. It is time, high time that we turned towards technique. It is time to discard the old slogan, the obsolete slogan of non-interference in technique, and ourselves become specialists, experts, complete masters of our economic affairs.

It is frequently asked: Why have we not one-man management? We do not have it and we shall not get it until we have mastered technique. Until there are among us Bolsheviks a sufficient number of people thoroughly familiar with technique, economy and finance, we shall not have real one-man management. You can write as many resolutions as you please, take as many vows as you please, but, unless you master the technique, economy and finance of the mill, factory or mine, nothing will come of it, there will be no one-man management.

Hence, the task is for us to master technique ourselves, to become masters of the business ourselves. This is the sole guarantee that our plans will be carried out in full, and that one-man management will be established.

This, of course, is no easy matter; but it can certainly be accomplished. Science, technical experience, knowledge, are all things that can be acquired. We may not have them today, but tomorrow we shall. The main thing is to have the passionate Bolshevik desire to master technique, to master the science of production. Everything can be achieved, everything can be overcome, if there is a passionate desire for it.

It is sometimes asked whether it is not possible to slow down the tempo somewhat, to put a check on the movement. No, comrades, it is not possible! The tempo must not be reduced! On the contrary, we must increase it as much as is within our powers and possibilities.

This is dictated to us by our obligations to the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. This is dictated to us by our obligations to the working class of the whole world.

To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten. But we do not want to be beaten. No, we refuse to be beaten! One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered because of her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongol khans. She was beaten by the Turkish beys. She was beaten by the Swedish feudal lords. She was beaten by the Polish and Lithuanian gentry. She was beaten by the British and French capitalists. She was beaten by the Japanese barons. All beat her—because of her backwardness, because of her military backwardness, cultural backwardness, political backwardness, industrial backwardness, agricultural backwardness. They beat her because it was profitable and could be done with impunity. You remember the words of the pre-revolutionary poet: “You are poor and abundant, mighty and impotent, Mother Russia.”<sup>17</sup> Those gentlemen were quite familiar with the verses of the old poet. They beat her, saying: “You are abundant,” so one can enrich oneself at your expense. They beat her, saying: “You are poor and impotent,” so you can be beaten and plundered with impunity. Such is the law of the exploiters—to beat the backward and the weak. It is the jungle law of capitalism. You are backward, you are weak—therefore you are wrong; hence you can be beaten and enslaved. You are mighty—therefore you are right; hence we must be wary of you.

That is why we must no longer lag behind.

In the past we had no fatherland, nor could we have had one. But now that we have overthrown capitalism and power is in our hands, in the hands of the people, we have a fatherland, and we will uphold its independence. Do you want our socialist fatherland to be beaten and to lose its independence? If you do not want this, you must put an end to its backwardness in the shortest possible time and develop a genuine Bolshevik tempo in building up its socialist economy. There is no other way. That is why Lenin said on the eve of the October Revolution: “Either perish, or overtake and outstrip the advanced capitalist countries.”

We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years.

Either we do it, or we shall go under. That is what our obligations to the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. dictate to us.

But we have yet other, more serious and more important, obligations. They are our obligations to the world proletariat. They coincide with our obligations to the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. But we place them higher. The working class of the U.S.S.R. is part of the world working class. We achieved victory not solely through the efforts of the working class of the U.S.S.R., but also thanks to the support of the working class of the world. Without this support we would have been torn to pieces long ago. It is said that our country is the shock brigade of the proletariat of all countries.

That is well said. But it imposes very serious obligations upon us. Why does the international proletariat support us? How did we merit this support? By the fact that we were the first to hurl ourselves into the battle against capitalism, we were the first to establish working-class state power, we were the first to begin building socialism.

By the fact that we were engaged on a cause which, if successful, will transform the whole world and free the entire working class. But what is needed for success? The elimination of our backwardness, the development of a high Bolshevik tempo of construction. We must march forward in such a way that the working class of the whole world, looking at us, may say: There you have my



advanced detachment, my shock brigade, my working-class state power, my fatherland; they are engaged on their cause, our cause, and they are working well; let us support them against the capitalists and promote the cause of the world revolution. Must we not justify the hopes of the world's working class, must we not fulfil our obligations to them? Yes, we must if we do not want to utterly disgrace ourselves.

Such are our obligations, internal and international.

As you see, they dictate to us a Bolshevik tempo of development.

I will not say that we have accomplished nothing in regard to management of production during these years.

In fact, we have accomplished a good deal. We have doubled our industrial output compared with the pre-war level. We have created the largest-scale agricultural production in the world. But we could have accomplished still more if we had tried during this period really to master production, the technique of production, the financial and economic side of it.

In ten years at most we must make good the distance that separates us from the advanced capitalist countries.

We have all the "objective" possibilities for this. The only thing lacking is the ability to make proper use of these possibilities. And that depends on us. Only on us!

It is time we learned to make use of these possibilities. It is time to put an end to the rotten line of non-interference in production. It is time to adopt a new line, one corresponding to the present period—the line of interfering in everything. If you are a factory manager—interfere in all the affairs of the factory, look into everything, let nothing escape you, learn and learn again. Bolsheviks must master technique. It is time Bolsheviks themselves became experts. In the period of reconstruction, technique decides everything. And an economic executive who does not want to study technique, who does not want to master technique, is a joke and not an executive.

It is said that it is hard to master technique. That is not true! There are no fortresses that Bolsheviks cannot capture. We have solved a number of most difficult problems. We have overthrown capitalism. We have assumed power. We have built up a huge socialist industry. We have transferred the middle peasants on to the path of socialism. We have already accomplished what is most important from the point of view of construction. What remains to be done is not so much: to study technique, to master science. And when we have done that we shall develop a tempo of which we dare not even dream at present.

And we shall do it if we really want to.

Pravda, No. 35,  
February 5, 1931



REPORT TO THE SEVENTEENTH PARTY CONGRESS ON THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL  
COMMITTEE OF THE C.P.S.U.(B.)  
(January 1934)



The Stakhanov Movement in the Soviet Union

1935



MASTERING BOLSHEVISM

On the shortcomings of Party work and measures for the liquidation  
Trotskyist and other double-crossers.

1937

5: Our Tasks

HOW are we to liquidate the shortcomings in our work? What must be done in order to do this?

It is necessary to carry out the following measures:

1. First and foremost the attention of our Party comrades who get bogged on "current questions" in one department or another must be turned towards the big political questions of both international and internal character.

2. The political work of our Party must be raised to the proper level making the main task that of the political training and Bolshevik steeling of the Party, Soviet and economic cadres.

3. It should be explained to our Party comrades that the economic successes. The significance of which is undoubtedly very great and which we shall also strive for in the future, day after day, year after year, are nevertheless not the whole of our socialist construction.

It should be explained that the seamy sides connected with economic successes and expressed in self-satisfaction, in carelessness, in the deadening of political intuition, can be liquidated only if economic successes are combined with the successes of Party construction and the developed political work of our Party.

It should be explained that economic successes themselves, their stability and duration, wholly and fully depend on the successes of Party organizational and Party political work, that without this condition economic successes may prove to be built on sand.

4. It should be remembered and never forgotten that as long as capitalist encirclement exists there will be wreckers, diversionists, spies, terrorists, sent behind the frontiers of the Soviet Union by the intelligence services of foreign states; this should be remembered and a struggle should be carried on against those comrades who underestimate the significance of the fact of capitalist encirclement, who underestimate the strength and significance of wrecking.

It should be explained to our Party comrades that no economic successes whatsoever, no matter how great they are, can annul the fact of capitalist encirclement and the results arising therefrom.

The necessary measures must be taken to give our comrades, both Party and non-Party Bolsheviks, the possibility of getting acquainted with the aims and tasks, with the practice and technique of the wrecking, diversionist and espionage work of the foreign intelligence services.

5. It should be explained to our Party comrades that the Trotskyites, who represent the active elements in the diversionist, wrecking and espionage work of the foreign intelligence services, have already long ceased to be a political trend in the working class, that they have already long ceased to serve any idea compatible with the interests of the working class, that they have turned into a gang of wreckers, diversionists, spies, assassins, without principles and ideas, working for the foreign intelligence services.

It should be explained that in the struggle against contemporary Trotskyism, not the old methods, the methods of discussion, must be used, but new methods, methods for smashing and uprooting it.

6. The difference between the present-day wreckers and the wreckers of the Shakhty period should be explained to our Party comrades. It should be explained to them that whereas the wreckers of the Shakhty period misled our people in the sphere of technique, utilizing their technical backwardness, the present-day wreckers with a Party card in their possession deceive our people by utilizing the political trust shown towards them as Party members, utilizing the political carelessness of our people.

To the old slogan of the mastery of technique which corresponded to the Shakhty period there must be added the new slogan calling for the political training of cadres, the mastery of Bolshevism and the liquidation of our political trustfulness, a slogan which fully corresponds to the present period we are now passing through.

The question may be asked: Was it not possible ten years ago, at the time of the Shakhty period, to

advance both slogans simultaneously, i.e., the first slogan regarding the mastery of technique and the second slogan regarding the political training of cadres? No, it was not possible. Things are not done that way in the Bolshevik Party. At the turning points of the revolutionary movement, some basic slogan is always advanced as the key slogan in order, by catching on to it, to draw in the whole chain. That is what Lenin taught us: find the main link in the chain of our work, lay hold of it, draw it in, in order through it to draw in the whole chain and go forward. The history of the revolutionary movement shows that this is the only correct tactic.

In the Shakhty period, the weakness of our people lay in their technical backwardness. Technical questions and not political ones were our weak spots at that time. As far as our political attitude towards the wreckers of that time was concerned, it was perfectly clear that it was the attitude of Bolsheviks towards politically alien people. We liquidated this technical weakness of ours by advancing the slogan regarding the mastery of technique and by educating tens and hundreds of thousands of technically steered Bolshevik cadres during the past period.

It is a different question now when we have technically developed Bolshevik cadres and when the part of wreckers is played not by openly alien people in possession of technical superiority over our own people, but by people in possession of Party membership cards and enjoying all the rights of Party membership. The weakness from which our people suffer now is not technical backwardness, but political carelessness, blind faith in people who have come by chance into possession of Party membership cards, the failure to check up on people not according to the political declarations they make, but according to the results of the work they do. The key question now facing us is not the liquidation of the technical backwardness of our cadres, for in the main this has already been done, but the liquidation of the political carelessness and political trustfulness in wreckers who have by chance obtained possession of Party membership cards.

Such is the fundamental difference between the key question in respect to the struggle for cadres in the period of the Shakhty days and the key question of the present period.

That is why ten years ago we could and should not have issued both the slogans together, namely, the one regarding the mastery of technique and the one regarding the political training of cadres.

This is why the old slogan of the mastery of technique must now be supplemented by the new slogan of the mastery of Bolshevism, the political training of cadres and the liquidation of our political carelessness.

7. We must destroy and cast aside the rotten theory that with every advance we make the class struggle here of necessity would die down more and more, and that in proportion as we achieve successes the class enemy would become more and more tractable.

This is not only a rotten theory but a dangerous one for it lulls our people, leads them into a trap, and makes it possible for the class enemy to rally for the struggle against the Soviet government.

On the contrary, the further forward we advance, the greater the successes we achieve, the greater will be the fury of the remnants of the broken exploiting classes, the sooner will they resort to sharper forms of struggle, the more will they seek to harm the Soviet state and the more will they clutch at the most desperate means of struggle, as the last resort of doomed people.

It should be borne in mind that the remnants of the broken classes in the U.S.S.R. are not alone. They have the direct support of our enemies beyond the bounds of the U.S.S.R. It would be a mistake to think that the sphere of the class struggle is limited to the bounds of the U.S.S.R. While one end of the class struggle has its operation within the bounds of the U.S.S.R., its other stretches

to the bounds of the bourgeois states surrounding us. The remnants of the broken classes cannot but be aware of this. And precisely because they are, they will continue their desperate assaults in the future.

This is what history teaches us. This is what Leninism teaches us.

We must remember all this and be on our guard.

8. We must destroy and cast aside another rotten theory according to which the individual who is not always engaged in wrecking and who even occasionally shows successes in his work cannot be a wrecker.

This strange theory exposes the naivete of its authors. No wrecker will engage in wrecking all along the line if he wants to avoid being exposed in the shortest possible time. On the contrary, the real wrecker has from time to time to show successes in his work, for this is his only means of keeping himself going as a wrecker, of winning the confidence of people and of continuing his wrecking work.

I think that this question is clear and requires no further explanation.

9. We must destroy and cast aside the third rotten theory, to the effect that the systematic fulfilment of economic plans reduces wrecking and its consequences to naught.

Such a theory can only have one purpose, namely, to titillate the self-esteem of our departmental officials, to lull them and to weaken their struggle against wrecking.

What is the meaning of "the systematic fulfilment of our economic plans"?

First, it has been proved that all our economic plans are below normal because they do not take account of the tremendous reserves and possibilities lying hidden in our national economy.

Second, the general fulfilment of the economic plans by the commissariats as a whole does not mean that the plans are also fulfilled by certain very important branches. On the contrary, the facts go to show that quite a number of commissariats, which fulfil or even more than fulfil the economic plans for the year, systematically fail to fulfil the plans in several very important branches of the national economy.

Third, there can be no doubt that had the wreckers not been exposed and thrown out, the position in respect to the fulfilment of economic plans would have been far worse. This is something which the shortsighted authors of the theory under review need to remember.

Fourth, the wreckers usually adapt the main part of their wrecking work not to the peace-time period, but to that of the eve of war or of war itself. Suppose we were to lull ourselves with the rotten theory of "the systematic fulfilment of the economic plans", and were not to touch the wreckers. Do the authors of this rotten theory appreciate what a tremendous amount of harm the wreckers would do to our country in case of war, if we were to allow them to remain inside the body of our national economy, sheltered by the rotten theory of "the systematic fulfilment of economic plans"?

Is it not clear that the theory of "the systematic fulfilment of economic plans" is a theory advantageous to the wreckers?

10. We must destroy and cast aside the fourth rotten theory to the effect that the Stakhanov movement is the chief means for liquidation of wrecking.

This theory has been invented so as to divert the blow from the wreckers with a noise of chatter about Stakhanov workers and the Stakhanov movement.

In his report, Comrade Molotov quoted a whole number of facts which go to show how the Trotskyites and non-Trotskyite wreckers in the Kuznets and Don Basins abused the confidence of our politically careless comrades, systematically led the Stakhanov workers a dance, placed spokes in their wheels, so to speak, artificially created a whole number of obstacles preventing their working successfully and finally succeeded in disorganizing their work.

What could the Stakhanov workers do alone if the way capital construction was carried on by the wreckers in the Don Basin, let us say, led to a gap between the slowly moving preparatory work of coal mining and all the other fields of the work?

Is it not clear that the Stakhanov movement itself is in need of our effective aid against all the various machinations of the wreckers so as to speed things on and to fulfil its great mission? Is it not clear that the struggle against wrecking for its liquidations and the gaining of the upper hand over wrecking is the necessary condition for the Stakhanov movement to blossom out to the full? I think that this question is also clear and in no need of further comment.

11. We must destroy and cast aside the fifth rotten theory to the effect that the Trotskyite wreckers possess no more reserve, that they are mustering their last reserves.

This is untrue comrades. Only naive people could invent such a theory. The Trotskyite wreckers have their reserves. These consist first and foremost of the remnants of the smashed exploiting classes in the U.S.S.R. They consist of a whole number of groups and organizations beyond the bounds of the U.S.S.R. and hostile to the Soviet Union.

Take, for example, the Trotskyite counter-revolutionary Fourth International, two-thirds of which is made up of spies and subversive agents. Isn't this a reserve? Is it not clear that this international of spies will select forces to do the spying and wrecking work of the Trotskyites?

Or take, for example, the group of the rascal Sheflo in Norway, who provided a haven for the arch-spy Trotsky and helped him to do harm to the Soviet Union.

Isn't this group a reserve? Who can deny that this counter-revolutionary group will continue in the future to render services to the Trotskyite spies and wreckers?

Or take, for example, the Souvarine group in France, a group of rascals like Sheflo. Isn't this a reserve? Can it be denied that this group of scoundrels will also help the Trotskyites in their espionage and wrecking work against the Soviet Union?

All these ladies and gentlemen from Germany, all the Ruth Fischers, Maslovs and Urbans who have sold themselves body and soul to the fascists -- aren't they reserves for the espionage and wrecking work of the Trotskyites?

Or take, for example, the well-known gang of American writers headed by the notorious racketeer Eastman, all these gangsters of the pen who live by slandering the working class of the Soviet Union -- aren't they reserves for Trotskyism?

No, the rotten theory that the Trotskyites are mustering their last forces must be cast aside.

12. Finally, we must destroy and cast aside still another rotten theory to the effect that since we Bolsheviks are many while the wreckers are few; since we Bolsheviks have the support of tens of millions of people while the Trotskyite wreckers can be numbered in tens and units, then we Bolsheviks can afford to pay no attention to such a handful of wreckers.

This is incorrect, comrades. This more than strange theory has been invented so as to bring solace to certain of our leading comrades who have failed in their work by reason of their inability to carry on a struggle against the wrecking, to lull their vigilance and to make it possible for them to sleep in peace.

It is, of course, true that the Trotskyite wreckers have the support of isolated individuals, while the Bolsheviks have the support of tens of millions of people. But it lay no means follows from this that the wreckers are not able to inflict very serious damage on us. It does not at all need a big number of people to do harm and to cause damage. Tens of thousands of workers have to be set to work to build a Dnieprostroy, but it requires not more than a few dozen men to blow it up. Several Red Army corps may be necessary to win a battle during war time. But it only needs a few spies somewhere in the army headquarters or even in a divisional staff to steal the plan of operations and pass it on to the enemy for this gain to be lost. Thousands of people are required to build a big railway bridges but a few people are sufficient to blow it up. Tens and hundreds of such examples could be quoted.

Consequently, we must not comfort ourselves with the fact that we are many, while they, the Trotskyite wreckers, are few.

We must bring about a situation where there is not a single Trotskyite wrecker left in our ranks.

This is how the matter stands with the question of how to liquidate the shortcomings in our work, common to all our organizations, economic and Soviet administrative and Party. Such are the measures necessary for the liquidation of these shortcomings.

As regards the Party organizations in particular and the defects in their work, the measures necessary to liquidate these shortcomings are stated in sufficient detail in the draft resolution submitted for your consideration. I therefore think there is no need to enlarge here on this aspect of the question.

I would like to say just a few words on the question of political training and raising the level of our Party cadres.

I think that if we are able, if we succeed in giving ideological training to our Party cadres from top to bottom and steeling them politically so that they can find their bearings with ease in the internal and international situation, if we succeed in makings of them fully mature Leninists and Marxists capable of solving the questions of the leadership of the country without making serious mistakes, then we can thereby solve nine-tenths of all our tasks.

How do things stand with regard to the leading forces of our Party?

In our Party, if we have in mind its leading strata, there are about 3,000 to 4,000 first rank leaders whom I would call our Party's corps of generals.

Then there are 30,000 to 40,000 middle rank leaders who are our Party corps of officers.

Then there are about 100,000 to 150,000 of the lower rank Party command staff who are, so to speak, our Party's non-commissioned officers.

The task is to raise the ideological level and political vigor of these command cadres and to introduce among them fresh forces awaiting promotion, and thus expand the ranks of our leading forces.

What does this require?

First and foremost, we must make the proposal to our Party leaders beginning with secretaries of our Party units to the secretaries of regional and republican Party organizations to select, during a definite period, two individuals, two Party functionaries each capable of being able to act as their effective deputies.

The question may be asked: Where are we to get these two deputies for each one, if we have no such people, no workers who correspond to these requirements? This is incorrect, comrades. We have tens of thousands of capable and talented people. It only needs to know them and to promote them in time so that they should not remain in their old places too long and begin to rot. Seek and ye shall find.

Further, four-month Party courses must be established in each regional center to give secretaries of units Party training and to re-equip them. The secretaries of all primary Party organizations (units) should be sent to these courses and then when they finish them and return home their deputies and the most capable members of the primary Party organizations should be sent to these courses.

Further, to re-equip politically the first secretaries of the district organizations, eight-month Lenin courses must be established in the U.S.S.R., in, say, ten of the most important centers.

The first secretaries of district and regional Party organizations should be sent to these courses, and then when they finish them and return home their deputies and the most capable members of the district and regional organizations sent there.

Further, six-month courses for the study of history and the Party's policy under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union must be set up to achieve the ideological re-equipment and political improvement of secretaries of the town Party organizations. The first and second secretaries of town Party organizations should be sent to these courses and then when they have finished them and return home the most capable members of the town Party organizations should be sent there.

Finally, a six-month conference on questions of internal and international policy under the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. must be established.

The first secretaries of divisional and provincial organizations and the Central Committees of the national Communist Parties should be sent here. These comrades should provide not one but several persons really capable of replacing the leaders of the Central Committee of our Party. This should and must be done.

I conclude, comrades.

We have thus outlined the main defects in our work, including those which are common to all our organizations, economic, administrative and Party, and also those which are specifically peculiar to



Party organizations only -- defects made use of by the enemies of the working class for their diversionist and wrecking, espionage and terrorist work.

We have further outlined the chief measures to be taken to render harmless and liquidate the diversive, wrecking, espionage and terrorist assaults of the Trotskyite fascist agents of the foreign intelligence services.

The question arises: Can we carry through all these measures, do we possess all the necessary possibilities for this? Undoubtedly we can. We can, because we have at our disposal all the means necessary for the realization of these measures.

What do we lack? We lack only one thing: the readiness to liquidate our own carelessness, our own complacency, our own political shortsightedness.

There is the rub. Cannot we who have overthrown capitalism, in the main built socialism, and raised aloft the great banner of world communism, get rid of this ridiculous and idiotic disease?

We have no reason to doubt that we shall certainly get rid of it, given, of course, that we will it. We will get rid of it, not just in an ordinary manner but in a Bolshevik fashion, in real fashion.

And when we get rid of this idiotic disease, we can say with complete confidence that we fear no enemies from within or without, we fear none of their assaults, for we shall shatter them in the future, as we are doing now and as we have done in the past. (Applause.)



SPEECH AT THE PRE-ELECTION MEETING  
OF VOTERS OF STALIN'S ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF MOSCOW.

MOSCOW 11 DECEMBER 1937 in the Bolshoi Theater.

I know what confidence means. It naturally lays upon me new and additional duties and, consequently, new and additional responsibilities. Well, it is not customary among us Bolsheviks to refuse responsibilities. I accept them willingly. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

For my part, I would like to assure you, comrades, that you may safely rely on Comrade Stalin. (Loud and sustained cheers. A voice : "And we all stand for Comrade Stalin!") You may take it for granted that Comrade Stalin will be able to discharge his duty to the people (applause), to the working class (applause), to the peasantry (applause) and to the intelligentsia. (Applause.)

Here there are no capitalists and no landlords and, consequently, no pressure is exerted by

propertied classes on non-propertied classes.

Some ten years ago the question might still be debated whether socialism could be built in our country or not. Today this is no longer a debatable question. Today it is a matter of facts, a matter of real life, a matter of habits that permeate the whole life of the people. Our mills and factories are being run without capitalists. The work is directed by men and women of the people. That is what we call socialism in practice.

The work is directed by men and women of the people.

That is what we call socialism in daily life, that is what we call a free, socialist life.

I have already mentioned the law which empowers the electors to recall their deputies before the expiration of their term of office if they should turn off the right road. Hence it is the duty and right of the electors to keep their deputies constantly under their control and to impress upon them that they must under no circumstances sink to the level of political philistines, impress upon their deputies that they must be like the great Lenin. (Applause.)



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